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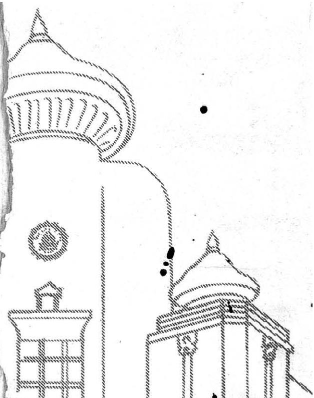

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5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharata and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha, and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, I-89-i

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

General Editors

K. M. MUNSHI

N. CHANDRASEKHARA AIYER

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THE WOLF BOY

AND OTHER KULAPATI'S LETTERS

(Third Series)

BY K. M. MUNSHI

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BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

THE WOLF BOY AND OTHER KULAPATI'S LETTERS

(Third Series)

BY

K. M. MUNSHI

1956

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

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THE Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages and was to be priced at Rs. 1-12-0.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian language: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organization. The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit:

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarized by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it—the *Gita* by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is nowhere." After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself; containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita* which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

1, Queen Victoria Road,
New Delhi,
3rd October 1951.

K. M. MUNSHI

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This is the third series of Kulapati's Letters written by the author from June, 1954 to May, 1955.

Kulapati's Letters are published in the *Bhavan's Journal* as also in several newspapers and journals all over the country, both in their original as well as in translations in various languages. They not only interest the readers of newspapers and journals, but there is a constant demand for their previous numbers, such as those collected in the First Series (Janu's Death, 1952-53) and the Second Series (City of Paradise, 1953-54).

The topics vary with the author's mood of the fortnight: they range from the 'Wolf-boy' and 'Duryodhana's Feeding Bottle' to spiritual discourses, in the course of which both thought and expression sparkle in myriad patterns.

Reading these letters, we can keep company with the Kulapati in undertaking picturesque journeys to sacred shrines, taking holy dips, enjoying the company of sadhus and saints, seeing historical episodes in vivid colours and laughing at human foibles: all drawn on the background of a rich and sensitive life.

We have, therefore, great pleasure in presenting the Third Series of Kulapati's Letters from No. XLIX to No. LXXIV

THE MADURA TAMIL SANGAM

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WHAT I BELIEVE—INDIA'S HERITAGE—HER MISSION

RAJ BHAVAN, NAINI TAL,
30th May, 1954.

MY YOUNG FRIEND,

IT IS MAY, 1954. I wrote my first Kulapati's Letter to you two years ago on May 15, 1952. During the last fifty-two fortnights I have tried to write to you frankly about the men I meet and the things I see; men and things of high importance; also of my experiences and many essential things in life.

In these two years, if I have written much, I have also pondered equally upon things of the world and of the Spirit. However, I have not written to you of these deeper and higher things, of which a glimpse has been vouchsafed to me now and then, for they are but signposts along the path on which I am led. They are important to me, but of no importance to others.

Now, however as I begin the Third Series of these Letters, I should tell you about what I believe—those things which have come to me, not by way of the intellect, but through faith.

I must share this faith with you.

II

God is and informs and upholds the Creation; the Spirit is His expression in man and the Law of Spirit is supreme.

The aim of a man's efforts is to transform himself, his fellow-beings and the material world so that the Spirit is unfolded in life and God becomes manifest.

harmonised and regulated by the ethical and spiritual values calculated to lead to this goal.

This Central Idea in Indian culture, coming to us through the ages, regulates our characteristic way of life; it is sustained by the Message, of which the *Gita* is the great scripture; the *Upanishads*, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* elaborate expositions thereon; and the lives and teachings of Dayanand, Ramakrishna, Gandhiji and Aurobindo are but modern commentaries.

To read, to understand and to live up to the Message is to follow the path of the Spirit.

India's culture is not a dead culture. To invoke it is not to indulge in narrow revivalism; to live up to it is not to be a reactionary. It is eternal in the sense that its Central Idea has persisted through time. But it is ever fresh; the values shaped by the Idea can be revitalised age after age to suit the needs of changing time.

This is why Indian culture has an undying vitality and is even now being reintegrated to meet the demands of the hour.

This reintegration cannot be achieved merely by the pursuit of traditional systems, but by developing an infinite receptivity of the soul, a scientific outlook which seeks new truths with unabashed zeal; that technical knowledge can place in the hands of the Spirit the power to transform not only life, put the whole collective organism of life, and, where the need arises, to resist organised evil.

No attempt to transform land or life or to resist evil can succeed, unless man himself is first transformed; that is, the Spirit must form within him his personality; he must learn to live by the Law of the Spirit.

As we constantly see, science and knowledge are valueless, nay dangerous, in the hands of the man in whom the Spirit remains inarticulate.

IV

Indian culture is born of the Soil. All foreign solutions

which do not proceed from its Central Idea are illusory. They poison the fountain source of life, destroy its strength and vitality and deny to it the living inspiration of the Message.

Materialism is foreign to Indian culture. An exclusive devotion to material comforts in disregard of the Spirit is a denial of all that India stands for.

Such devotion leads to aggressive, grabbing nationalism; to the exploitation of man by man, to the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few so that the rest lack their daily needs, to cults and organizations wedded to hatred and violence. These are the brood of lust and have for their aim the destruction of all that ennobles man. They are the denial of the Spirit.

India has to stand against those cults which harness the loyalty of the ignorant to this soulless materialism; which stimulate the desire for sectional gains—whether it be labour against capital, class against class, party against party, group against group or nation against nation,—inspiring each to the fight for material benefits at the expense of the others.

India has also to fight the technique of such cults, which teach that every grievance should be exploited and left to others to cure; that the existing conditions should be altered, not by transforming men with the aid of the Spirit, but by a group of determined men dominating and enslaving them.

A secular state is, therefore, not a Godless state. It is not even a welfare state, which caters for material comforts to the exclusion of the life of the Spirit. It is the kingdom of God where every man is free to worship Him in his own way; where every man dedicates his every power to ceaseless work; where none possesses more than he needs and none is denied those needs; where God is worshipped and the Spirit is invoked through prayer and service and love; where every effort is inspired by an earnest desire to see all in Him and Him in all.

V

Mayavada, illusionism, and other-worldliness are nega-tive doctrines which distort the message of India.

Life is real. It is rooted in the body, the social organization, the collective organism of life, comprising men, animals, trees and soil. The Spirit, however, is involved in the mind; the mind in the body; the body in life.

The Spirit alone, therefore, can infuse life with a purpose and invest it with a power to transform itself. Neither the mind, nor the body, nor the social or collective life can be transformed from without. All becoming is an unfolding of the Spirit within.

The transformation is one integral continuous process, proceeding from the Spirit to the Matter. "You are the undying Spirit", says Sri Krishna to Arjuna, "I am the son of the Earth", sings the Vedic sage. Both declare the same essential truth of life. Spirit and Matter are neither different nor separable.

VI

Certain new ideas and movements in art and literature bearing alluring names, sanctify the materialistic idealogy. They are subtle propaganda which thwart the pursuit of the Fundamental Aspiration, reduce man to the level of an insect and destroy his destiny. They seek to seduce our intellectuals from their anchorage in Indian culture and have therefore to be avoided, exposed, and fought.

The true purpose of art and literature is to feel, to visualise and to create Truth, Love and Beauty–*Satyam Shivam Sundaram,* in one word, Absolute Beauty. This is achieved not merely through stone or colour but through personality and thereby through the whole of life. And this purpose must be achieved by the study of beautiful works of art and literature; by the contemplation of beautiful ideas; by the appreciation of beautiful lives and leading from these to beauty *in* life; and by passing from a

realization of beauty in life to living in Absolute Beauty. This is the process of transformation.

Materialism is a process by which you are asked to pass from ugly works in art and literature to ugly ideas; from ugly ideas to ugly lives; from ugly lives to absolute ugliness. And when determined groups dictate blind obedience to their policies and programmes based on such ugliness, they undermine the life of the Spirit and lead men and nations to their doom.

VII

The materialistic interpretation of history is a gross error. Man is not merely matter; nor a cog in the machine of collective life; nor a slave chained to the chariot of national or party aggrandisement. Material well-being is indeed an important element in the flow of history, but it is not its sole motive, nor even its principal determinant.

The true interpretation of history is historical. It is a record of the progress of regression of man in terms of his self-fulfilment. The moving force behind it is the unfolding of the Spirit through myriad lives with their ceaseless struggles against the evil and error, fear and violence which thwart the destiny of man.

History would be meaningless if we denied the historical role of Vyas, Buddha, Christ, Shankara, Nanak and Chaitanya, Tulsidas and Ramdas, Ramakrishna and Gandhiji or ignored the part played by the heroes, saints and men of God who lived in self-imposed hardships and immolated themselves for great causes or in the service of God.

To unfold the Spirit in the development of the race is India's mission in History. This is why while other nations are dead or dying, India has lived through the ages.

The ceaseless process whereby the Spirit unfolds itself in the life of the race is represented by the ceaseless struggle betwen the forces of integration and disintegration in collective life, which continues like the mythical wars of the Devas and the Asuras.

Communities and nations rise, decline and fall. They integrate and disintegrate. They either develop a collective mind, outlook and will, rising superior to instincts, comforts and passions, or lose one or the other, only to lose them all eventually. In one case they develop an articulate personality; in the other, they cast it off and lapse into a parasitic existence.

The integration and disintegration of human aggregates forms the basic pattern of history as viewed through continous time.

The process is going on in India before our very eyes today. The process of integration comprises two simultaneous movements; one owes its origin to the Central Idea in India; the other, to the age-old hatred, and greed, and the modern materialistic idealogies.

In spite of ethnic and linguistic differences, India has attained a degree of cohesion under the influence of her Culture which found expression through Sanskrit and of which Sanskrit is still the source, be it sometimes remote and often unperceived. This integrating force provides the historical background, the content and energy which leads India to a richer harmony and eventually to the Life of the Spirit.

Another integrating force created by the fusion of races and cultures, during the Era of Resistance, is Hindi which draws its inspiration not only from Sanskrit but also from the Bhakti Renaissance of the 16th century. Its all but universal acceptance as the national medium provides the meeting-ground for our multi-lingual generation.

The new and powerful integrating force which the impact of the West has produced, finds expression in the national government; in the unified legal and judicial systems; in the uniform administrative structure; in the Universities, which, through the medium of English, reared new generations, inspired by our new nationalism, of which the Congress is both an embodiment and an instrument.

Through the Congress Gandhiji founded an independent

centre of power, supported by popular will. To this we owe our freedom; the success of our Constituent Assembly; self-restraint which characterised our masses in the General Elections; our rising national strength and our will to maintain stability.

But the disintegrating forces are at work, too.

Disintegration is a slow and imperceptible process, which never provides spectacular landmarks like defeat and victory in war. But once begun, its process becomes far more significant and fatal.

Our cultural heritage is not being adequately appreciated; nor is the mission of India in history being generally understood. A materialistic idealogy is also with us, with its doctrines and cults of hatred and violence.

We are precipitately trying to eliminate English without replacing it by Hindi. Religious differences and caste exclusiveness still operate, often with vigour; regionalism is asserting itself in diverse ways. Linguism, *i.e.*, the elevation of a language as the basis for aggressive group sentiment, seeking expression in terms of power politics, is reviving medieval particularism. These are all disintegrating factors; their growth denies the unity, the sanctity and the heritage of India.

The face of the world is changing, whether we like it or not. Nations are at war, some violent, some cold. Vast powers of destruction are in the hands of man. The West is crumbling. England is weak; France has disintegrated. Communism—militant Godless materialism—threatens the world with its far-reaching tentacles.

Our paramount duty in India, therefore, is to resist disintegration by strengthening the forces of integration.

For let us never forget that India has a mission in history. This is not to court the success and failure through which the West is passing. It is to discover and fulfil the meaning of history; to lead man towards Light, Strength and Love, so that he may fulfil himself by living in God.

L

THE HOLY DIP AT THE SANGAM: THE URGE BEHIND IT—THE SEARCH FOR A MAHATMA

RAJ BHAVAN, NAINI TAL,
13th June, 1954.

AT the Kumbh 50,00,000 men and women from all parts of India came to take a dip in the holy *Sangam*. They came uninvited facing hardships, lured by no material consideration. They wanted but one privilege: a dip for a few moments in the holy river. It was something to which they had looked forward for twelve long years, and for the sake of those few minutes they came with eager hope and quenchless faith. After the dip they returned, each with the consciousness that he had reached something higher and nobler.

I thought and thought about this mighty phenomenon exhibited by the collective mind of India: Why did a dip in the *Sangam* satisfy some urge, and what was that urge?

II

Those who came to the Kumbh ranged from the most learned to the most ignorant, from the highest to the lowest. It was an emphatic reply to those who in these days glibly ask the question: "Is religion necessary?" This question is asked most frequently by those who have an unshakable faith in Lenin, Stalin and Materialism, their belief is more fanatic and unreasoning than any religious faith could be, and certainly not as ennobling if it possesses that quality at all.

But to ask this question is rather like asking: "Is it necessary for man to possess the urge to be better than he is?" or "Is it necessary for him to strengthen the funda-

mental aspiration towards freedom or joy, love or beauty?" or "Is it necessary for a human to be human?" These questions cannot be satisfactorily answered by logic.

The question: "Is religion necessary?" is asked only when the questioner has already decided that it is no longer necessary. Let us, therefore, try to understand what 'religion' means.

In India it means *dharma,* the aggregate of all that uplifts man, upholds the Moral Order and supports faith in God. That was the *dharma* which brought people, millions of them, to the Kumbh. For there was no single religious organization there; on the contrary, there was complete liberty of belief; the unity was provided by a faith, supported by a common urge.

Over two thousand years ago, however, our Rishis realised the truth underlying faith. When the intellect is marching ever forward, godlessness is a betrayal of human dignity, while a religion of profession stagnates and cannot evoke genuine faith. The basic element of religion has to be found in the real needs of the human being, in an urge which is both universal and fundamental to human nature.

In its pure form, the urge is an aspiration to seek one's truth; to live a higher life of joy, beauty and love, to accept the universal moral order as an all pervading law of life, to broaden consciousness by thought, training and experience till one can live and move in a fuller consciousness which encompasses all created things. When the urge is insistent, it becomes an irrepressible longing to find an unfettered life, transcending human limitations in which not only man himself but all things are placed in harmonious relation to one another.

This aspiration is fundamental to man; it is the radiation of the Spirit in man. And its fulfilment is a basic need, and it comes when man is seeking light or freedom, power or peace, but these not in their transient worldly sense; in other words, when he is pursuing Beauty, which is God.

The forms and dogmas of religion implicitly followed or

believed in, are necessary, however, for those who have not developed this urge so well as to feel it as pure aspiration. It is through the power of imagination which make these beliefs living and the faith which they evoke that men apprehend the nature of the urge and feel its creative power.

This aspiration comes to man in every age, even in an age of the greatest material comfort. Man is never happy with what he is; he wants to be more of himself than he is. Material comforts, however ample, can never satisfy this craving; on the contrary, they bring only satiety and induce a stronger nostalgia for the life of the Spirit.

There was no lack of material comfort in ancient Rome, nor has any age known of material comfort such as we find in modern America. In both of these countries, as in the life of every rich man who has not sunk to the level of an insect, the aspiration has been known to re-assert itself at sometimes or the other.

This is the reason why men, otherwise worldly or fond of comforts, seek the hardship of a pilgrimage; the humility of associating with some begging sadhu; the discomfort of a shuddering dip in the snow-cold turbid waters of the *Sangam*. The urge in them is thereby satisfied; they feel more of themselves than they were before; they participate in a wider joy which they would otherwise have never known.

The holy dip at the *Sangam*, therefore, has a meaning for those who have faith. The scoffers cannot appreciate it, for they have not the humility to understand the basic needs of human nature.

III

People, who talk of such faith with a superior, contemptuous air, do not care to analyse their own attitude in the matter. Ask them, "Would you not like truth to prevail, if not now, at least ultimately"? "Yes, we would like it to", they would answer.

Ask them, "Would you not like both individual and social life to be beautiful? 'We would, certainly'; that is the welfare state", they would say.

"Would you not like men to be good to each other to sympathise with each other in suffering and sorrow?" "Of course, we would like it very much".

And if asked: "Would you not like men to be fearless"? they would reply, "Certainly we would". And "Do you not wish for joy" Of course, they would, especially a lasting joy which would not fade.

However, if I were to ask the doubters a further question: "If, by acquiring deeper faith, I can become more truthful and good day by day; if my life can grow into beauty, however, little; if I can develop fearlessness and a state of mind which, in its calmness, can feel joy—even for a transient moment—would you not like to do this"? The answer is sure to be: "Certainly. But is it possible?"

But if I were to say that a pilgrimage to a shrine or a dip in a sacred river is for millions a necessary step in acquiring such faith, they would just sneer at it. They have convinced themselves that those who feel such a need have darkened souls and know not the glories of this unique scientific age with its searing doubts, its endless struggles and its night-marish fears. They never pause to enquire what solace, strength and uplift such acts of faith give to those who perform them; and what relief such acts can bring to this unhappy age.

If I went further and asked the critics another question: "Suppose I believe in Something good and true, beautiful, fearless and joyous in unlimited measure, calling it Absolute Beauty; and suppose that I could not only imagine but visualise, feel, and contact, that Something and in the process I could acquire a touch of Its perfection, what then"? Immediately the reply would be: "You are talking of religion; you are talking of God".

This is the difficulty with all the people who ask: "Is it necessary to have religion"? They are frightened to

press their enquiries to their logical conclusion lest they find that this Something may have to be accepted; that it may turn out to be God; and that if they once open their hearts to Him, complete surrender proves inescapable.

Those who doubt the necessity of religion want to be convinced about it at once. They try to throw the burden on those who believe in God as if godlessness were self-evident. They are not prepared to make the necessary effort to investigate their own doubts. They can work for fourteen years to get a degree; they can work for a life-time to earn a little pension. But to develop Godminded-ness, they insist, there should be no preparation, training or effort.

This idea comes of a lop-sided mental attitude which emphasises the animal or the social nature of man at the cost of his Fundamental Aspiration.

We, in this age, mouth slogans like social progress, social adjustment and social relations. We forget however, that social relations arise from the action and reaction between the Fundamental Aspiration in man and his Sociability. If these are viewed separately, we have only a truncated philo-sophy; not social science, but unscientific dogmatism.

IV

This Aspiration, when it becomes articulate, may express itself through forms of beauty; in sound, or stone, or colour; in art and literary creation; in love, sympathy and good-ness. When it is intensified, the longing is only satisfied by a contact with the Spirit.

An impulse to contact the Spirit is felt when one lives in an incessant desire to enter and live in something wider and higher than the normal self. And in this progress to-wards a spiritual life, the time comes to every one when the Aspiration so grows in intensity as to release creative power. Then the pure joy of self-fulfilment follows.

We may call this Joy, Light, Bliss or Freedom, Self-fulfil-ment, Immorality, or Integration; each may choose the

word he likes; I prefer to call it God or Absolute Beauty.

This is man's destiny. If it were not so the revolutionary progress of ten million years would have been in vain. Men would have no future, no goal, no hope.

The faith, the effort and the goal which go to make up this dynamic progress towards self-fulfilment is religion.

To millions the Kumbh was a school where such progress could be made. To some it was a course leading to graduation; to a very few, perhaps, it was a post-graduate seminar.

To the scoffer, however, it was madness; to the go-getter it was a spectacular occasion for quarrelling with everything and everybody. Each one found in this collective faith what he deserved.

V

When men on such occasions as the Kumbh seek a *Mahatma* they are in fact, in search of an integrated personality, a "presence" to admire and to worship which will dwell in them and establish faith where before none existed. This is not true of all men certainly; for, there were quite a number of innocents abroad, credulous enough to accept any one in saffron-coloured clothes as a saviour. There were also wolves—and quite a number—who had come there to carry out their nefarious purposes in sheep's clothing.

Man is essentially egotistic and has to acquire humility in order to reach faith. Often he seeks deliverance from egotism—for no one can live all the time in egotism—by worshipping an external symbol—a stone idol, a grave or *stupa;* a tree. However, these symbols, by themselves are inadequate; they are brought to life only when a worshipful presence is enshrined in the heart. It may be the memory of a beloved, as in the case of Dante. It may be the personality of a teacher, a *guru,* the distant figure of some illumined soul, or even an *avatar.*

To the seeker, such a presence becomes a Pillar of

Fire leading him out of darkness towards the light. The man who lacks such a "presence" in his heart is indeed to be pitied. The man who cannot admire, worship, nor open his heart in humility to some worshipful one can have neither faith nor self-fulfilment.

It would not be true to say that every one who seeks such a "presence" finds inspiration from a personality whom you or I would call integrated. Every one seeks the presence which appeals to him. The objective test of integration has nothing to do with the craving of the individual heart for an appealing presence.

Sri Krishna has no appeal for some; Buddha, no appeal for others; Shankara, Gandhiji and Sri Aurobindo have no appeal for many; but this is not to say that they are less integrated. What matters is not the merits of the personality, but the peculiar need of the individual in whose heart this presence is to be enshrined.

The Lord truly said:—

Others, bereft of true perception seek "other" gods;
Others, bereft of true perception by this desire or that, seek "other" gods;
They follow this rite or the other, as their nature bids;
But whatever the "god" the devotee feels moved to worship in faith;
In that self-same faith, I confirm him.
Firm in such faith, he seeks to win the favour of his "god".
And from him, he gets the boons he craves. But in fact
They are bestowed by none but Me.

It is the quality of the faith, the intensity with which the "presence" fills his devotee that count; and not the actual qualities of the "presence".

VI

What is an integrated personality?

The integrated personality is a one in whom the Aspira-

tion burns bright by constant endeavour—*Sthitoyatna*—and is maintained at a high level by enthusiasm bringing, *Śamvega.* "My zeal for the Lord hath eaten me up", said the Christian Saint. This is not rhetoric; it is the experience of all those who have contacted the Spirit.

This endeavour, however, has to be constant, ceaseless, vigilant, steadfast; it must be persisted in till the effort is replaced by a fixed habit of mind; the resolute will—*dhriti*—to reach the highest self, is developed.

The moulds of the ego are then broken. Peace follows: the peace which knows no haste, no unquiet, no tension.

The gates are then open for the Spirit to enter.

Ordinarily our thinking, feeling and being with which our personality is associated are narrow and fragmentary. By constant endeavour all mental processess are imbued with a deep and wide spiritual consciousness; the outer existence is integrated with the inner; the ordinary way of life is replaced by God's way of life. When the endeavour is constant it slowly operates on the whole field of life, not on any single sector of it. The whole personality is transformed and becomes a medium of expression.

With this stage, "Becoming" is reached. What follows is an increasingly richer self-expression, a progressively harmonising development of the different urges. The integration of personality is reached.

Hansdevji is one such personality. I could see how he lived in the hearts of the men and women, many of them well-educated, who were with him at the Kumbh.

THE LAST OF THE LLAMA—THE WOLF-BOY OF LUCKNOW

RAJ BHAVAN, NAINI TAL,
27th June, 1954.

IT is the 2nd of June. Two years have gone by since I was sworn in as the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. How time flies!

I have come again to live in the Government House at Naini Tal, which I described after my first visit in earlier letters, now collected in a book under the caption; "Janu's Death and Other Kulapati's Letters".

Naini Tal is just as picturesque. But I miss a friend. The poor, poor Llama is dead. I wrote to you about this South American animal, with the neck of a camel and the body of an overgrown sheep; a heavy, but thin-legged animal, whose only way of expressing its annoyance was to spit at its keeper.

This she-Llama came to the Lucknow Zoo—and in summer to the Government House at Naini Tal—alone and unfriended—nineteen years ago. Visitors came to see her; she stood and gazed at them sheepishly, unresponsive to all except her keeper's caresses; a pathetic victim of man's vandalism in rooting out creatures from their animal world for stupid boys to gaze at.

Last year the Llama was weak: she was ageing. This year when I saw her, she was simply lying on a bed of grass; she had no strength to get up on her thin legs. Day after day I went to see her and she just lifted her head and looked at her world of a stray visitor and her keeper. What thoughts passed in that vacant mind, one could scarcely guess.

A few days more, and she lay on the grass, unable to lift her head, her long neck prostrate. The next day she

could not take food; on the third, she was breathing hard. She died that night; a poor, desolate thing, torn from her people, living behind prison bars ever since she was captured in her native wilderness over twenty years ago.

I felt sad at her loneliness, at the tragedy which was her life, at her sad death.

The only person who shed a tear was the keeper, who had loved her. No more will there be his dear Llama to spit at him.

II

Suddenly, as by the wave of a magic wand, quiet, suburban Lucknow, has hit the headlines of the world's newspapers. Never since the immortal ruler Wajid Ali Shah went dancing about its streets with anklets on his feet a hundred years ago has Lucknow been surrounded with such fascinating halo.

Some cities are very lucky. Bombay always hits the headlines on account of its speculators, one of whom once brought down the Liverpool Cotton Exchange. Of late it has been in the headlines because of its 'wet' fraternity, which is determined to escape the rigours of 'dryness'. New Delhi always hits the headlines because of its legislators, who breathe fire and brimstone in rhetorical periods or Miltonian rhymes. Washington cannot, of course, escape the headlines, even if it tries. MacCarthy sees to that. But all this looks cheap and vulgar beside aristocratic Lucknow. Lucknow has leapt into sudden limelight. It has a Wolf-Boy!

Nearly three thousand years ago Rome had her wolf-boys—Romulus and Remus. Fed by a she-wolf, they grew lustily, fighting everybody and abducting Sabine girls with rare gusto. But not so Lucknow. It has a dignity of its own. It has its Ramu—fed by a she-wolf; reared by a whole pack; picked up by villagers, names unknown, and whereabouts untraced; left in a railway-train, enveloped in a blanket; recovered on January the 17th by a vigilant

police; now safely housed in the Balrampur Hospital and fondly looked after by Dr. D. N. Sharma, who is trying his best to undo what the wolves had been doing to Ramu for years.

For a few days, the news shook Lucknow and presently a quake stirred the capitals of the world: Lucknow had a genuine wolf-boy. Doctors hurried to the spot, stethoscopes in hand; psychologists with pen and pencil tried their best to transfer the credit from the she-wolf to themselves! Nothing doing. Our wolf-boy was genuine, and Lucknow was not to be deprived of its honour.

The news stirred soft hearts across the seas. Some people wired: 'Please do not keep him in human sorroundings. Send him back to his dear old wolf-parents.' Children from far-away schools sent toys and good wishes: they would have loved to hug Ramu to their hearts. But Ramu remains supremely indifferent. The world's worries about him he knows not of; much less does he care for its concern.

And the Governor—and if perchance the 'Who is Who' is not by your bedside, refer to Raj Bhavan, Lucknow—went to the Hospital, Secretary, A.D.C., pilot, and all, including the gubernatorial flag, and called on Ramu that was to-be, for he had no name at the time.

Parents also rushed to Lucknow, wanting to father Ramu. A wolf-boy is an asset. He can make money faster than most graduate sons. He can be the hope of a famishing family. So they came, the parents. Some even went to court, but they had no luck. They could not prove to judicial satisfaction that theirs was the son who had suddenly become so famous, and they slunk away. So Dr. Sharma remains the father of the wolf-boy by compulsion.

A patient in the same ward of the Hospital undertook to look after the wolf-boy. This kindly attendant has long-hair, whether kept so on purpose, or to remind Ramu of his foster-mother, is difficult to say. Anyhow, after many

months, he provides the proper background when he wheels Ramu's chair along the Hospital corridors.

III

When I first saw the wolf-boy a few days after he came to the Hospital, at about the end of January, he had already been shorn of his long, unkempt, bedraggled locks. There were scars on his scalp temples, forehead and many of his bony prominences—most of them healed. He had a haggard, starved, frightened look. He refused to face the light, and he had a strange, vacant glare which was turned away from men.

His sharp double-rowed upper teeth, protruded from his pinched mouth, which normally remained open, saliva dripping from it on both sides. He never responded to anyone's call. When his ribs were poked to attract his attention, he turned his eyes to the poker with a great effort, and emitted a weak, thin cry of annoyance. Either he had been born dumb or for lack of human company, had never learnt to speak. His hearing, meanwhile, was unimpaired, even sharp, though he could utter no human sound.

His hands and feet were nothing but skin and bone. One could see no muscles on them worth the name. He could neither walk nor stand and obviously had not done so for years, if ever. He had what in medical language are called 'contractures' of his limbs. He could neither use his hands at will, nor knew how to use them as we do. The palms of his hands were as soft as a baby's but the fingers were claw-like and he kept them closed. This was particularly so in the case of his left hand, the nails of which were long curved. Evidently, his only mode of locomotion had been slithering along with the aid of his elbows, as if he had lived in some small cavity, which left no room for standing-up.

When first he came, he rejected all cooked food and if it was given forcibly he would throw it out. Only

when raw meat was brought to him, did his eyes brighten, his nose dilate, and he begin to sniff. He could smell it even at a considerable distance and would take it with great relish, chewing it only once or twice, and straightway swallowing it down. Even now, after fourteen weeks in the Hospital, he prefers raw meat to cooked food. And there must be no cup, no glass, for this nature's child: the only art he had known was to put his whole mouth into the saucer and lap the water in the manner of dogs!

He had none of our inhibitions with regard to excretory functions; he was just an animal.

Meanwhile, Ramu simply does not recognise human things. Even his self-constituted 'mother' evokes but little response in him. But when an Alsatian dog is brought to him, his interest wakens and he clasps him in an embrace.

IV

I was keen that Ramu should be taken to see the wolves at the Zoo. So at the beginning of May, Sardar Panikkar then our guest, Mummy, I and the doctors, took him to the cage of the wolves in the Lucknow Zoo. He was wheeled in front of them, but, seeing the crowd, the wolves retired to the other end of the cage and it was difficult to get Ramu to look at them.

He was better than when I had seen him last and massage had made his hands and feet less bony. He had obviously gained weight, but even after fourteen weeks, he was not what a boy of ten should be like.

It was with difficulty that the wolves were induced to come to our side of the cage and when they did they just ran round in circles, but when Ramu's gaze fell on them, his face broke into a broad smile. He made no sign and uttered no sound, but he was evidently pleased with them.

Unfortunately, the wolves were afraid of all of us standing on Ramu's side of the cage and it was impossible to get them to stay in front of his chair, but at last a tiny

tiger cub, of only fifteen days old, was brought to him. Suddenly his face showed a lively interest; his hands struggled, though ineffectively, to grasp the cub. When the little creature was placed on his knees, his arms closed round it affectionately and he was all smiles.

V

It was a case for Sherlock Holmes. Was he a wolf-boy, a mentally retarded child, a speechless cripple, or someone who had been forced deliberately and most heartlessly, to grow up deformed?

There could be no doubt that Ramu had never used his hands and feet, acquired the power of speech, learned how to drink with his hands, or known any other means of locomotion besides slithering. He had never tasted cooked food, but liked meat. All this pointed to his having been brought up in a place where walking erect was not possible, and where there was a total absence of humanity.

His aversion to light and to human company, his love for the Alsatian; his gladness at seeing the wolves and the all-too transparent ecstasy with which he had embraced the tiger-cub, indicated his kinship with the canine.

In any case Ramu does not appear to be the mentally-retarded child of normal human parents. If he were, he would surely be familiar with the way of drinking from a cup and would at least be responsive to human kindness. At the end of fourteen weeks, he does now at least recognise his name; laughs; knows his attendant, and has come to love toys.

The theory that he may be the victim of a nervous disease which has left him a speechless cripple, does not fit in either. Medical experts have not found any definite evidence of organic nervous disorder. He has a strongly developed sense of smell, taste, hearing and touch.

In fourteen weeks, however, he has not been able to formulate any sound remotely resembling speech, though this may perhaps indicate some impediment.

I have come across two cases of microcephalous girls in the Children's Aid Society in Bombay, who had been taught by street acrobat to play tricks like monkeys. They were complete imbeciles, but they smiled, nodded, giggled, responded, and made gestures like human beings.

Is this a case of someone who, by keeping a child in a hole with dogs, has hoped to bring it up as one who may make money for him by acrobatic tricks and, when he found that the boy was dying, left him in a running train to escape a charge of murder?

This is a plausible theory with which I have played for some time. But then Ramu could play no tricks. And could a village acrobat afford to keep a child on a costly diet of raw meat?

So now you know what Watsonian zeal may do even without a Sherlock Holmes. Ramu would appear to have been brought up in animal surroundings, to have lived exactly like an animal, eating raw flesh, dragging himself about with the aids of his elbows and with a complete absence of human companionship. That leads to but one conclusion—he was brought up by animals. But what animals could they be?

VI

Experts on animal life say that the female of only three known species of wild animals possesses such maternal affection as to be capable of bringing up a small human child. They are the African baboon, the bear and the wolf. Apart from the Romulus and Remus of tradition, Rudyard Kipling has left us his inimitable creation, Mowgli. It is a matter of record, that a certain Christian priest called Singh, rescued two little girls, 'Kamla' and 'Amla', from a wolf's den and kept them under observation for nine years in a Midnapore orphanage. The Civil Surgeon of Lucknow also came across a 'wolf-boy' some years ago.

Those who have studied wolves tell us that children can be reared and brought up by this animal away from

all human contact. The she-wolf feeds the child, the whole pack, adopts it as its own and whenever the pack moves out into the open, it forms a protective fortress round its ward.

The question, however, arises that if Ramu was simply a wolf-boy, why should he not have acquired powers of locomotion? The doctor who knows of a similar case, tells me that the wolf-boy could run fast on his elbows and knees.

Again, if Ramu has been brought up by a she-wolf, how has he been able to procure water and food without using his powers of locomotion? It may be that, like all canines, the foster-parents had fed Ramu on small morsels of chewed meat and he may have got at water by slithering about on the ground. This would imply that, from the very time he was picked up by the wolves, the boy could not use his hands and feet, and that, having regard to his physical disability, the foster-parents brought him up in a special way.

If this is so, it is a rare case of wolfish benignity, and a rarer case still of a weak child surviving under abnormal conditions.

So the wolf-boy is still a mystery.

LII

THE CHANCELLOR'S CAMP – THE N.C.C. CAMP – THE HATH-YOGI

RAJ BHAVAN, NAINI TAL,
11th July, 1954.

THE essence of higher education is that the teacher and the pupils should live together in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and respect, energised by intellectual pursuits

and inspired by higher idealism. With the object of securing this aim, the Chancellor's Camp of selected students and teachers from the Universities of Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra and Roorkee was organised in May 1953.

The objects of the Camp are that our Universities be national temples of learning and culture; that our Universities be laboratories for reintegrating national values to suit modern needs; and that our Universities be *ashrams* with a soul and a collective will, leading to a dedicated life.

Since the first annual meet, three branch Camps have been held at Agra, Allahabad and Roorkee. This year we held the Second Annual Camp at Chaubattia, which is about five miles from Ranikhet. Its impression can best be described in terms of my diary notes.

II

"We have come to Ranikhet—a delightful spot, flooded by sunshine, thickly wooded with pines; the snow-ranges of the Himalayas from Badrinath to Nepal sweep the horizon. The Forest Bungalow, where we have camped, is situated on a height confronting the snow-range.

This year, about 90 selected students and 20 teachers, including several Deans from three Universities, have been able to attend the Camp. The members from the Roorkee University, however, have not been able to come; their examination was not over.

On May 20, the Camp opens with the recital of prayers from the *Vedas*, the *Qoran*, the *Zend Avesta*, the Buddhistic Invocation, a hymn of Guru Nanak and a Christian hymn. Most of them were chanted or sung at the prayer-meeting of Gandhiji every evening.

The Vice-Chancellor of Lucknow welcomes the members of the Camp; the General Organiser, Dr. Radha Kamal Mukherjee, speaks on 'Values'; I inaugurate the Camp by speaking on 'India, Her Heritage and Mission.'

We then go for a community lunch provided by 'the Women's Food Council.'

III

"The next day we set the programme for the remaining twenty days: one hour and-a-half every morning, *shramdan* by members—digging pits for tree-plantation in the Chaubattia gardens; 10 a.m., community prayers led by Mummy; recital of one chapter from the *Gita*, followed by a discourse on it by me; an address by an invited guest or a teacher member; then reports of the seminar, discussions, and finally, general discussions.

'The Heritage and the Mission of India' is selected as the general theme to which all discussions are to lead, and they are to branch off from The *Bhagvad-gita*, *Gandhi's View of Life* by Shukla, and *Human Destiny* by the eminent biologist, Lecomte du Nouy.

The Camp is divided into four groups, each with a teacher guide. After lunch the groups meet in seminars to study the books, conduct discussions and prepare reports. The evenings are kept free for walks.

Then there are entertainments, often by the students themselves, sometimes by Jalota and his wife, an expert *tabla* player in her own right. The U.S.I.S. has contributed shows of informative and educational films.

Apart from the professors who give instructive lectures, we have lectures from several important guests: Pantji, the Chief Minister; Vice-Chancellor Jugal Kishore; Minister Mohan Lal Gautam; Barron van Pallandt, Ambassador of the Netherlands; ex-Judge Sapru and Deputy Minister Rawat. Brigadier Virendra Singh speaks on the 'National Cadet Corps'; Brigadier Paintal, in two very lucid talks, gives vivid impressions of the experience of the Indian Army in Korea. These last are more interesting, for they show how bravely and with what self-restraint our Custodian Force acquitted itself as an army of peace in an international crisis.

In my daily talks on the *Gita*, I myself find fresh inspiration. This is the first time I have spoken on the Message day after day, chapter by chapter. When the discussions become boring, I fall back upon some humorous or quaint experience.

The discussions are very lively. Several teachers take a prominent part, but Dr. A. C. Chatterjee, Dean of the Faculty of Science, and Dr. Radha Kamal Mukerjee, Director of the J. K. Institute of Sociology, Lucknow University, are the life and soul of them. One starts and ends with Einstein's Universe; the other cannot help referring to social justice every time he speaks. They are a well-matched pair; to and fro, like tennis balls, fly their verbal sallies to the thorough enjoyment of the assembly, and to their own enlightment.

The discussions range over morality *vs.* economics; science *vs.* religion; Gandhism *vs.* Industrialism; materialism *vs.* spiritualism; social development *vs.* fundamental clauses; in fact, over almost everything under the sun.

The reports of the students' seminars are of a very high order; and even their discussions in the assembly reach a fairly high level. Some of them are quick at grasping and expressing ideas. They show their alertness even while discussing ideas from the *Gita*. But slogans like 'standards of living', 'economic evils', 'social injustice', are too often bandied about without relation to realities, for they have not been taught so to relate them.

The lady students—though of high attainments—are very shy and silent, all except one, who makes a valuable contribution to the debate on education. The lunch hour is delightful; quite a few students sit at my table and some others at Mummy's.

The prayers become a very interesting part of the programme. In the beginning, members appear a little shy to join with Mummy when she leads the prayers. When Chandabhai chants the first verse of the *Qoran* with the intonation peculiar to Arabic vowels—which are con-

sonants in our Indian languages—it strikes many students as unfamiliar. Very soon, however, the unfamiliarity wears off. Later, when Jalota joins in with his sonorous voice, the whole Camp co-operates enthusiastically in the singing of all the hymns—Sanskrit, Arabic, Avesta, Pali, Old Punjabi and English.

To many, this is the first experience of community prayers, or for the matter of that, of prayers. There is a request that the meaning of each hymn shall be explained. The explanation is given by Dr. Babu Ram Saksena and Dr. Saeed Hasan. Some students remark with some surprise that 'the *Qoran* prayer has the same meaning as ours.'

Such prayers jointly chanted provide a unique and mysterious bond. They are the best cure for religious fanaticism, which we cannot conquer by ignoring religion nor by abusing it, but only by an appreciative approach to all religions. Such composite prayers, if generally accepted, and particularly in educational institutions, would do us a great deal of good. But only if those in charge of our education appreciate fundamental human needs. When shall we, educated men, learn to shed our arrogance and re-learn the art of praying to God with humility?

A picture comes before my mind's eye: it is the Sevagram at Wardha. As I come near to Gandhiji's hut, I find Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan saying his *namaz* on the varendah carpet. I enter the hut and find another man of God—Gandhiji. My eyes turn to the little picture of Christ hung on the wall in front. An hour or two more and both of them go to the prayers and in deep devotion to God attain that unity of heart which is not possible otherwise. What would India not give to have this healing prayer-touch? And who, except ourselves, will deny its value?

IV

"The National Cadet Corps is also holding its Annual

Camp at Ranikhet. This N.C.C. Movement is one of the finest started by Free India. 80,000 young men all over the country—from next year they will be 100,000—are undergoing some kind of military training and building up a reserve of potential officers for the Army. Incidentally, they are developing comradeship and a sense of discipline. In most educational institutions, cadets form the hard core of well-behaved and disciplined students.

I inaugurate the N.C.C. Camp on May the 20th. It consists of over 500 students, who apart from undergoing military training, have set themselves the task of converting a steep hill-side into a sports ground for the town. On June the 4th, the N.C.C. Camp returns the compliment by playing host to the Chancellor's Camp.

I find that the Cadets have done an excellent job. The Camp, mostly under tents, is neat; the students are working hard and enjoying themselves as they work. For the occasion, the members of the Chancellor's Camp also join in the work. Most of the Cadets are from the Universities of U.P. and there is general fraternization.

The N.C.C. Cadets come to lunch with us at the Chaubattia Barracks, and the members of the Chancellor's Camp play the hard-working host. All are in jubilant mood. The photograph taken on the occasion looks like a sea of heads, with Major-General Chimni's wide front and soldierly beard, making him into a thundering Jove presiding over an over-crowded Olympus.

V

"Devmurti, the *Hathyogi*, is also in the Camp.

I saw him first when he was giving a demonstration at Kanpur and bent a thick iron rod with his fore-arm. He cheerfully lay under wooden boards over which an elephant walked up and down. But when it came to the turn of the three-ton road-roller containing about twenty individuals, my heart missed a beat. I did not want to be the witness of a spectacular suicide. But Devmurti was

unconcerned. The road-roller just climbed over the boards which had been placed across him: as he moved his air-tight chest, the road-roller rose and fell and the *Hath-yogi* laughed at the lightness of the weight, saying 'all these modern men weigh just one-fourth of a tola.'

As he happened to be in Ranikhet, I invited him to join the Camp. A splendid figure of a man with a fine beard and long flowing hair, he looks very much the Samson. He calls himself a *swami*, but he is not one. He is a married man with children who is obliged to adopt the ways and dress of a *sadhu*.

His control over his muscles and his lungs is nothing short of marvellous. He looks strong, but by no means a giant, as, say King Kong. But give him no more than a split second, and he can make the muscles on any part of his body bulge out, firm, well-rounded and statuesque, in a way which would fill even a Sandow with envy. He can stop his pulse, control his breath and churn his stomach and abdomen, as if worked by a machine.

Devmurti can make an effective speech on the art he knows all about, and can impart training by means of simple lessons. The physical culture course which he prescribes, consists of simplified *Hathyoga, Neti Sarvangasan, Pranayam* and *Jivantatva* exercise. Unlike King Kong he maintains his strength, not by eating dozens of eggs and plateful of chicken, but by an ordinary diet. Nevertheless he would easily let that man-mountain roll over his body as if he were a baby!

I had tried *Neti* half-a-century ago, but with a piece of silk cloth; now I tried it again with the catheter. Devmurti has simplified the process, and several members of the Camp took to it. One morning, I saw some of the Government House servants sitting in a line behind the Forest Rest House with Devmurti in command, trying to clear their nasal passages with solemn earnestness.

I only wish men like Devmurti could be enlisted to

found physical culture institutions, like the one Kuvalayanand has founded, in the city of Bombay.

VI

Let us make no mistake about it. From earliest recorded time, *Hathyoga* has been the Indian technique for acquiring physical perfection. Though developed in otherworldly trappings, it is very much *this*-worldly.

To the Shaivite *yogi*, the great adventure was to become Shiva through that absolute control of the body and nerves leading to the development of supra-sensory powers. But its primary aim was to make the body immortal. Its pioneers—the *Chiranjivs*—are claimed as having become immortal in flesh. Pre-eminent among them are Parashuram and Ashvathama; as also Bhartrihari and Gopichand, who are sung of in the moving folk-songs of the Nath Sampradaya street-singers.

The *Urdhvaretas* could live as long as they liked. Bhishma, Sri Krishna and Lakulesh, the founder of the *Pashupat* cult of Shaivism, are said by tradition to have possessed this power.

Sri Chand, the great *Udasin* saint, lived for 150 years. In 1905, I myself saw Brahmanand, who blessed Sri Arvind into yogihood; he had fought in his youth at the Third Battle of Panipat which took place in 1763. The sadhu in Joshimath is about 120; Hansdevji is 109, and Madhavadasji, the *guru* of Kuvalayanand, the founder of the Yoga Ashram in Bombay lived up to about 90.

Hathyoga has two aspects: one developmental; the other, therapeutic. All the exercises—*kriyas*—eschew extraneous aid, whether of drugs or appliances. Their aim is to regulate and rejuvenate the internal organs. *Neti* removes mucus, which is the source of very many troubles. *Pranayam* provides exercise for all the internal organs. In fact, it vitalises them, not only by deep breathing, but by the manipulation of the lungs either when filled or emptied of air. *Sarvangasan* reverses the flow of blood and streng

thens the arteries and the sagging viscera. *Shirsasan*—the exercise of standing on the head—is claimed to have the merit of preventing brainfag.

Thereby hangs a tale. During the Civil Disobedience days of 1930, when I was in the Nasik Jail, about eighty dictators of the Bombay War Council—as they were then called—were lodged in one of its wards. The Superintendent, once told them that it was not right for them to loiter about when he arrived for inspection. Sometimes he might be accompanied by some visitors. What would be the impression on a stranger if they appeared lacking in common courtesy? Would they, he asked, be good enough to stand in a line when he arrived? My dictator friends promptly promised to present themselves in a line.

The next day, Bhandari, happy at the thought that he had brought some discipline among the dictators, walked into the ward. Sixty of the dictators were all in a line as promised; only their heads were on the ground, their feet shooting up straight towards the Heaven. It was a *shirsasan* parade, enthusiastically held. The poor superintendent begged them in a panic not to be so courteous!

Shirsasan has gained immense prestige, as many eminent men in contemporary India are reputed to be doing it. Many, however, prefer *Sarvangasan*. They like to feel that their feet touch the sky, but they do not care to see the world looking topsy turvy!

VII

The military officers were most kind and hospitable. The Jammu & Kashmir Rifles took us to distant hills to give us demonstrations of 'the Platoon in attack and defence.' On our part it was a demonstration of our interest in warfare, for it poured heavily all the way. During the whole time of the attack and defence with smoke-bombs and blank and live rounds, we felt as if we were at some distant front; but instead of sitting in wet trenches, we

were sitting on chairs under umbrellas with rain-water dripping on us through the canvas roof.

The Kumaon Regimental Centre performed what was flatteringly termed, 'Exercise Kulapati.' The Action, called 'The Kidney Ridge Action'—fought on October 27, 1942, the fourth day of the famous Battle of El-Alamein between Rommel and Montgomery—was re-enacted as a sand-model exercise. This is a unique action, inasmuch as both sides have left a complete record of it. It was a conflict between tanks—man-made machines and infantrymen—God-made machines. Man and his spirit won.

Later, we attended the 'Assault Past', the Kumaoni conception of a march-past of the future. It is a smart combat formation, modified for ceremonial purposes, which gives a vivid idea of a battle to unfamiliar eyes.

VIII

To resume quoting from my Diary notes:

"June 9. Everybody thanks everybody else. Vice-Chancellor Banerji sums up the thanksgiving in a humorous little speech. As I wind up the proceedings of the Camp, I tell the students to ask themselves every day: first, "Am I trying to be better than I am?"; secondly, "Am I doing my best to make my little brick and put it in its proper place, in order to build the structure of India's life?".

In my final exhortation, I cannot help referring, once again to India's Mission.

"......Humanity is at the cross-roads. It has lost faith in its own destiny.... In the midst of this darkness, India stands alone, as a guide towards a better and more harmonious future. This is her mission in history and it is only when you have learnt to interpret this mission in your life with faith, that you will have fulfilled your own destiny as citizens of India."

The Camp provides an excellent opportunity in community living. It has several noteworthy achievements to its credit: the close friendliness in which the members lived;

the high level of the discussions and the atmosphere of self-restraint, both in behaviour and outlook.'

LIII

A WALKING "GITA" IN THE KUMBH–AKHADAS–A FORGOTTEN SAINT

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
25th July, 1954

IN the Kumbh, almost every camp held daily discourses and attracted large crowds, and it was the *Gita* that dominated the discourses in almost all the gatherings I was invited to attend.

The *Gita*, however, is a speciality with Swami Vidyanandji. If you want to know what the *Gita* is, go to him; if you want to know what it contains, go to his books; if you want to see this great scripture petrified as a marble divinity—looking like a modern woman—go to one of the *Gita* temples which he has built. And if you find in any town—as I did in Nagpur the other day—announcers going about reciting the *Gita* through loud-speakers, you can be sure that Vidyanandji is in town. But if you want to enjoy the *Gita*, feel it in you, hear him discoursing with oracular emphasis. And when at the Kumbh if you had wanted to see the *Gita* inscribed in copper, silver and gold sheets—six cantos on each—you should have gone, as I did, to his camp in the Kumbh.

Short, stout, square and bespectacled, the Swami reminding me, as he always does, of a human dynamo, received me with his usual heartiness. We have one thing in common; I can talk a Hindi which is more like Gujarati, and he can talk a Gujarati which is more like Hindi; so our conversation, apart from the substance, has a spiciness

of its own. He told me how he had visited Europe; how, having seen the Bible inscribed in silver and gold, he got the *Gita* done in the same way; how he was listened to breathlessly by large audiences; how Dada Saheb Mavalankar, the Speaker of the House of the People—had translated his discourses into English; and how he had even spoken on the B.B.C.

The gates of his camp looking like the wings of a huge theatre towered over other camps. On one side of it were over-sized, shapeless portraits of Bhima, Pratap, Shivaji and Laxmibai, on the other, those of the great expounders of the *Gita*, Shankaracharya and himself among them.

We entered the auditorium, where the public gathered at all hours of the day, to see, worship and hear the Swami. On the right of the door leading to the interior were seats with silken cushions. The central one was reserved for Vidyanandji himself. On the left of the door were copper, silver and golden plates, adorned by garlands.

Vidyanandji's one mission in life is to popularise and teach the *Gita*. For a temple to the *Gita* he can raise monies faster even than the Income-Tax Department. And he can get Gujarati ladies to pray in his *Gita* temples with the same fervour with which, in earlier days, they used to pray to the Goddesses Ambika and Kalika. In one of the temples, if ever you go there, you will find a statue of Vidyanandji himself praying to Goddess *Gita*.

When for a second time I went to his camp for lunch, I met a number of learned sanyasis as well as several of my friends. J.—a rich widow and one of my clients, who always refers to Vidyanandji as 'Bhagwan' was there, happy and smiling as ever.

It is a delight to hear Vidyanandji holding forth on the *Gita* before a large audience. Then you can discover the secret of his power. I once heard him addressing an audience of over ten thousand souls which he held in rapt attention for over an hour, moving it to laughter, emotion, or ecstatic devotion. So swayed were we by his

words that we all of us felt better at the end than we had before. And so it was that at the Kumbh, his discourses had a magnetic attraction for large crowds.

The next time I went to the camp was with the President, and the Swami presented each of us with a piece of bark cloth which he had brought from Kenya, where he had gone to preach the message of the *Gita*.

II

Vidyanandji holds the rank of a *Mahamandalesvara* in the *Nirvana sampradaya*, the Order which was founded by Narada, the first of the sages, who taught music to mankind and was associated with Badrinath. Later on, it was organized by the great Shankaracharya, who is reputed to have put the Kumbh on its present basis. But the organization must be very much older, for its set-up bears traces of the ancient republican traditions.

The Order consists of two classes of ascetics—the *sadhus* and *sanyasis*. The *sadhus* are organized into *akhadas*, which are in charge of temples and monasteries, many of which own considerable property all over India.

At the triennial Kumbh, the Order elects *mahants* as well as a Dhunibava, a strict ascetic, pledged to perform penances in front of a lighted fire. During his term the Dhunibava's word is law for the Order. The *mahants* manage the monasteries, temples and properties, but the intellectual and spiritual power is with the *sanyasis*, most of whom are very learned men. They have their *mandalesvaras*, and *sanyasis* of a superior rank are *mahamandalesvaras*. In fact, it is their function to study the *shastras*, to guard the doctrines of the cult and to provide spiritual solace and inspiration.

The *Nirvana Sampradaya* has played a glorious part in the development of the spiritual life and culture of India throughout the centuries. In the eighth century, it must have been a formidable organization. For without such an organization Shankaracharya could not have revolu-

his own studies. In a few years he returned to the Punjab and started the study of English.

A twenty-year-old *sanyasi,* blind, but with a rare clarity of mind, master of the orthodox *shastras* and with a knowledge of English, he was a phenomenon. In 1920 he was attracted by Gandhiji's movement; but only for a time. Being a wise young man he soon withdrew again to his role of a *sanyasi.* Nothing is more disgusting than the *sanyasi* who attempts to play at politics in the style of the politician.

Gangeswaranandji was a junior *sanyasi;* but he had faith and vision. He soon collected about fifty *sadhus* around him as his pupils and started his peripatetic school, which proved to be more peregrinative even than that of Socrates. The fifty-odd *sadhus* travelled from village to village, leading their blind *guru.* And as they went, day after day, sleeping on temple steps, fed by the devout in the villages, the *guru* taught the *shastras,* Panini's Grammar, Literature and the *smritis* to his walking school. Years passed. Followers flocked to him; some of his pupils became learned in their turn and Gangeswaranandji was accepted as a great *guru* of the Order. To-day, he is one of the most learned of *sanyasis* and at the Kumbh he presided over a gathering of the learned, to which the President had been invited.

During the Kumbh I visited Gangeswaranandji's Camp —a very large one, with about two thousand inmates— where I met several friends. I requested Swamiji, greater scholar that he was, to take an interest in the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad and at my request he invited the scholars of his Order to meet me. There were about fifty of them, all with a deep and life-long knowledge of the *shastras* and of Sanskrit, who work in different parts of the country, teaching and upholding the *dharma* under a self-imposed vow of piety. It was a rare privilege to spend an hour in their company.

Gangeswaranandji was true to his word. He travelled all the way from Abu to attend the third session of the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad at Nagpur.

V

The *Udasin* sect is also a very ancient one. But what took me by surprise was a temple to Shrichand in the Camp. Who was Shrichand? Guru Nanak's son, I was told, and one of the great organizers of the *Udasin Sampradaya.*

I was shocked at my ignorance. I knew something about Guru Nanak and his burning indignation at the plight to which India was reduced under Baber, but I was entirely ignorant of this great son of his who had made the *Udasin Sampradaya* a power in the tremendous Era of Resistance.

My mind went back to Guru Nanak's lines which I love so much:—

"He who comes with Love,
Must come with his head,
Held in his hand, as an offering to it."

But what about the son?

India's Era of Resistance began with the raids of Mahmud of Ghazni. It deepened in tragic intensity under the Sultanate of Delhi. Between the 11th and the 16th centuries the Hindus resisted the onslaughts on their power and faith, and in so doing, many died heroically. Many who survived were sold into slavery on a large scale; the women died in thousands on the funeral pyres; thousands more were kidnapped and saved their lives at the sacrifice of their honour.

Violent resistance had almost failed, but the saints, the *sanyasis,* the *sadhus* and the Brahmans, continued to fight with the weapons of the Spirit. It was they who kept learning alive and faith burning. They went from village to village, maintaining faith, restoring temples, preserving social life and converting social barriers into fortresses. The movement was led by the great Masters among them, who, with unflinching determination, kept the faith inviolate and alight, and spread the gospel of resistance through religious and social non-co-operation.

Non-violent non-co-operation is not the invention of

Gandhiji. It is a heritage of these Masters, who taught that the strength of the Spirit can, in the long run, overpower the strength of the Brute. Of such Masters—and perhaps one of the most outstanding—was Shrichand, the *Udasin.*

To Guru Nanak's wife, Sulakshani Devi, there was born on *Bhadrapad* 9th *Shukla,* S. 1551 (A.D. 1494) a son. The father was at the time serving the Lodi Sultanate of Delhi.

When Shrichand was born, the astrologers forecast a great future for him and wise men saw that the God Shankara Himself had come to earth. When the son was only four, the urge to sing of God was deep in the heart of Nanak, who left his job, his home and his worldly life, to sing of Him in his own way.

Shrichand's mother, Sulakshana Devi, took Shrichand to her father at Pakhoka, where the boy grew up serious and God-minded, studious, yet seeking the solitude of the forests again and again in order to commune with Nature.

To Pakhoka came Avinash Muni, a learned *Udasin sadhu,* himself a disciple of Vedamuni, who lived in a cave on Abu. Avinash Muni took a liking for Shrichand and the boy was attracted by the Muni.

In the little boy's mind the yearning for ascetic life took some concrete form. The marvelling grand-father knew the symptoms well. Shrichand, like his father, was being drawn to an unworldly life. So he decided to apply the two eternal remedies, a wife and profession; and began negotiations for a bride and for a teacher of Persian —then the passport to worldly success. Shrichand was barely eleven, but he knew his own mind better than did his grandfather. He quietly obtained his mother's blessings and left for Kashmir to study Sanskrit under the great Pandit Purshottam Kaul, whose reputation had reached all parts of Northern India.

The leaving of home and worldly life in childhood in search of Truth has been an Indian's birthright from the

days of Shukadevji—Vyasa's immortal son. Shrichand possessed a wonderful memory and unrelenting application and at fourteen he was the pride of Purushottam Kaul's academy. He participated in learned discussions, won academic triumph and came to be recognised as an heir to his master's learning. But the love of solitude did not leave him. Again and again he went to the forest, sat in meditation and sought the Infinite. Even the academy began to call him Chandramouli—Shiva Himself.

It is one of the dicta of *Yoga* that the right teacher only comes to him who is ripe for perfection, and so did Avinash Muni come to Kashmir and see the child whom he had once loved, now a prodigy of learning. Then came the call to Shrichand. He was no more than a boy in age, but he went to Avinash Muni one night and placed himself at his disposal. The search for Truth, the spread of Faith, the strength of the Spirit and the uplifting of men were to be his mission thereafter. He was initiated on *Ashad Shudh* 15, S. 1575 (A.D. 1519).

VI

Shrichand started on the first stage of a saint's career by visiting one shrine after another, seeking inspiration by live contact with men; not for the saint to find it in the holy cave, nor the cloistered seclusion of an academy. In the course of his peregrinations he met the great Rana Sanga of Mewar, the hero and statesman who was just then fostering an internecine conflict between the Muslim powers in order to get rid of them.

The Rana failed. At the joint invitation of him and Daulat Khan Lodi of Lahore, Baber came and destroyed the Sultan in 1526. Having done that, he declared a *jehad* against the Hindus. A year later, he was to smash the confederate forces of India, led by Sanga; to raise a tower of severed heads and to elevate himself to the position of the virtual master of North India.

With a loin cloth, a gourd, a rosary, a tiger-skin and

a *chipia* (pincers) as his only possessions, Shrichand toured the country, alleviating sorrow wherever he could. From village to village he went, spending the day and night in front of a fire, collecting the devout, giving them hope, combating hostile doctrines, preaching the message of *dharma* and performing miracles.

He wrote—it is said—as had Shankaracharya, a commentary on the *Brahmasutra*, the *Gita* and the *Vedas*. He initiated hundreds of disciples. As he travelled with a band of his *Udasin* disciples through Northern India, from Kabul to Abu, the weird, solitary, almost naked *sadhu*, became irresistible. He evoked devotion among all classes, and wherever he went he was even able to secure some relaxation of the oppressive religious measures taken by Muslim officials against the Hindus.

Shrichand was ageless. Time refused to write his wrinkles on that changeless brow. His mission continued, says the tradition of the cult, through the reigns of Baber, Humayun and Akbar, and when he was at Mewar, Maharana Pratap sought him out and drank of his inspiration. He saw Brindavan coming into its own under the great Akbar and was a witness of the efflorescence of the *Bhakti* revival. He saw saint-poets rising up all over the country and singing of a new hope.

Like Bhishma, Shrichand possessed the gift of dying when he willed, and he did not will it. At the age of a hundred and twelve he was at the height of his power and influence. Inspired by him the *Udasin* Order worked in many parts of the land. Its *akhadas* were an organized body of formidable ascetic warriors, to whom Hindus looked both for their spiritual solace and earthly protection.

His great fame reached Jehangir, and the Emperor received the venerable Saint at Lahore.

In 1624, as he toured the South, he came to the village of Takli and according to the traditions of the cult, met that Narayana, who later blossomed forth as Samarth Swami Ramdas, the *guru* of Shivaji, in a sense the spiritual father

of the great Indian resurgence which has ultimately culminated in modern India.

Shrichand gave his parting message in his *Matrashastra* and appointed four *Mandaladhishas* to guide the sect. On *Paush Krishna* 5th S. 1700 (1644), he departed life on the banks of the Ravi.

Thus ended a life which had seen the message of his Masters very nearly destroyed by the Lodis; which had spread the message of resistance; which had met and inspired Rana Sanga, as well as Maharana Pratap; which had witnessed the *Bhakti* revival during the days of Akbar and, if sectarian tradition tells the truth, had seen the threads of spiritual strength taken up by Swami Ramdas.

LIV

THEN AND NOW – HORROR OF TRUTH – SPIRITUAL READINESS

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
8th August, 1954.

As I come to the 'Mody Heights' for a walk, the sun flares red behind the pine trees. Above the hill-tops the drifting clouds hang pink and blue in the golden light. A cool breeze brings refreshing calmness to the soul. On the ground the bamboo grass joyously waves its tender ends. The branches of the tall pines—like the giant fingers of an expert dancer—move with rhythmic grace.

Many years ago I used to walk on my solitary rounds amidst waving shrubs and dancing branches through the glades of Matheran. But the quality of that experience and of this are different.

Is this age or experience? My growing grandchildren are proof positive, if need be, of my advancing age. But I am afraid that, so far at any rate, I feel disgracefully un-

oldish. I have never felt discontented with any time of my life, whatever it was. I never had to abandon my pleasures and pursuits with regret, nor have I ever clung in desperation to my old habits of life.

There is no doubt, however, about one thing. I feel the same interest in each passing hour and my struggle to grow has not lost its zest. Thirty years ago the grass, the trees and the birds had a different message for me. They told me of romance; of conquest; of undreamt accomplishments; of a life of increasing power and success. Then the ecstasies proceeded from keener perceptions and more passionate thrills; the disappointments and discouragements were more keenly felt. Then I was mightily impatient if my personal aims were not immediately achieved.

The world on which I then looked was both mysterious and wonderful; partly a clod of earth which I was there to lift; partly a place of disappointments, of sufferings and woes. Now the world is more charming. I do not wait for haunting beauties to stir my blood; a sweeter kind of beauty makes itself felt.

In the old days, I could not look upon a moonlight night without painful yearnings for stormy joys. Now, whether I am with or without a companion, it has an unutterable charm. Years ago Sappho's songs and Mira's *bhajans*, Goethe's *Werter* and Shelly's *Epipsychidion* stirred the fire of passion in me; and I was electrified by a powerfully charged current of emotions. These poems move me still, but their appeal is different; the fire is cooler and more luminous.

Now I move in the world with a far wider range of experience and I am often able to become the detached witness. I make less demands on the world; emotions, subtler and gentler, thrill me with the magic of sweet slow music. I do not see the world only in relation to me as before; often the whole of its movement becomes visible. I sometimes see the infinite process of transformation behind political and social problems. I even sense the forces

that move in a steady stream behind the froth and foam of personality.

II

I now realise that many of what I called my ideals and tastes were not my own; they were imaginary, conventional, or borrowed; the difficulty, however, was to convince myself that they were so. I was afraid that if I approached the problems in a truthful way, my illusions would be destroyed. It was only by a great effort that I overcame a horror or truth, and grew able to think out of my own truth and to identify myself with it.

This is one of the most common of human weaknesses. We are always glad that we have escaped truth, for we feel that it has saved us from taking the responsibility of thinking and deciding for ourselves. We feel no joy at continously passing our thoughts through the fire of truth —which is, in fact, real experience. That is why we like passing thoughts, but not creative ones. Creation is always painful.

I am now convinced that the habit of creative thinking is responsible for one's change of outlook on the problems of the world, not age. It has revealed to me the illusory character of some of my old attitudes.

For instance, thirty years ago, I was terribly self-conscious. When I encountered anyone I wanted to impress him, or to get my way of things accepted. And if I did not create the desired impressions or get my way, I was overcome by morbid pain. I felt as if my failure was going to be announced the next minute from every house-top. Often enough I had the crushing sense of being a complete failure.

This craving for being impressive has, to a great extent, left me now, because of creative thinking. It took me time to overcome the horror of this truth, which came to me later. You cannot impress nor can you carry your

point, unless you are truthful, that is, unless your whole being quivers with the energy of creative thought.

I am now content to think my own thoughts and speak my own language. There is no doubt that I still feel that I should entertain my friends; or that when I meet them I should tell them frankly what I think—and not talk polished nonsense. But now I am more at ease; I find myself less interested in myself and more in others. I do not demand agreement, because I know that it is valueless. I also know that it is very difficult for people who have no power of creative thought to agree with the creative thought of others.

Creative thought, I may warn you, is not merely intellectual. The passionate collaboration of our emotions and aspirations must form a part of it. Then, and then only, will it become the expression of a personality more or less integrated. What makes for creative thought therefore, is not its subject, but its quality. It is a thought which has been intensively felt and has become a 'seeing' thought.

The range of things that can stimulate creative thought is unlimited. Sometimes it can be a trivial impact—a sunset; the swift flight of a bird; the glimpse of a golden cloud. More often it is the result of conscious, persistent effort to see into the heart of things.

In every case, however, a creative thought must emerge like a new-born babe out of our whole being, for it is real only to the extent that it is seen and felt and experienced; that it changes you and is always with you, even as it grows. Its birth—like the birth of a child—is painful, and, like modern women, we do not like to undergo birth-pangs. So we turn to the newspaper, the wireless or the gramophone, golf or bridge, or the most fantastic of things, the crossword-puzzles and comics, for escape. We welcome almost anything rather than the thinking of our thoughts.

III

Once I thought that money, position, success, ceaseless energy, could affect the trend of events. But events can only be influenced by creative thought, for it springs from spiritual readiness. Money, position, success or energy, appear to affect this trend, but, in fact, it is not they that create the effect. It is the spiritual readiness behind them which secures the results.

We do not often realise the part which spiritual readiness plays in fulfilling our ambitions. That is why, when our ambition remains unfulfilled, we become frustrated. Failure would lose its demoralising effect if one realised that one was not ready for the fulfilling of ambition; that one had not acquired the inner readiness to put forward that quality of effort and thought necessary for fufilling it.

Security, wealth, and fame, therefore, only influence events, if they are the manifestations of the higher will. It is not Arjuna's victory or defeat that matters; but the quality of surrender unto God which he brings to bear on his immediate duty.

There is a superstition that lack of money means real want. Again, it is not so. I speak from experience. From 1902 to 1916 I was poor, terribly poor. But that did not make me unhappy. When there was no money, I just gave up wanting things. When I went to jail, I was determined to give up wanting things and never lacked them. This was a lesson to me. So long as I am spiritually ready for the things that come in my way, regardless of what they are, I am happy, money or no money.

Material security, therefore, without spiritual security, is no security at all. It is at the mercy of public catastrophe, revolution, inflation, depression; of the whims of fate or of its instruments, the paymasters. What has happened to the millions in Central Europe, who, forty years ago, based their life on material security?

But the real security depends just on oneself; on our capacity to link our fate with God. Sri Krishna said:

"Yogakshemam vahamyaham." "It is I", He said, "that bears the burden of the subsistence of those who love Me". It is a guarantee that we shall never be left with less than we *deserve.* This is spiritual readiness.

One of the greatest errors is to endow material security with such value that we hanker after its performance. Every day must bring its own security.

But the passion for security would continue to have its charms even if we did not develop the spiritual readiness. We canot solve the economic problem of individuals or nations by preaching their unimportance. A flippant attitude towards material welfare is not spiritual; any more than that which pins its faith on mere material welfare.

For instance, the doctrine of material welfare, as our economics would have it, insists on more wages, more privileges more holidays, more leisure. But dissociated from spiritual readiness—as unfortunately it is in these days—it only means more malingering, more demands, more strikes; more idle hours and more questionable pleasures; greater discontent and swifter destructiveness.

The same is true of success. Success suddenly acquired is as great a shock as the deepest sorrow or the ghastliest failure. If there is no spiritual readiness, our materialistic attitude becomes all the stronger; the appetites increase, but bring no joy. The real value of a hard-won success is the broadening of the understanding and the development of spiritual readiness, which come in its wake.

The same rule holds good of sex. Once a sexual act is permited for itself alone, a hunger for such acts grows and seeks satisfaction. If there is no spiritual readiness to sublimate it, joy disappears; imagination becomes insistent and has to be satisfied every time by grosser forms of indulgence. But if there is spiritual readiness every memory of the sublimated act will possess its own rare beauty.

In all these matters we cannot develop spiritual readiness, because we become victims of our vanity, the

prime characteristic of our ego. If we were not so, we, succees might teach us a wider view of things, enlarge our outlook and strengthen our spiritual attitude. What counts is not security, success or satisfaction, but the ceaseless efforts which we put foward and the failures we survive. These are the training schools for spiritual readiness. It is only when success follows that training that we come to regard it as something for which we are not responsible. Then we become humble. We see the hand of God. We realise His aim and purpose.

LV

INDIA'S NEW PATTERN: ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
August 15, 1954.

THE other day, sitting on Flag-Staff Hill, I was thinking of the 'Mission and Heritage of India'. As I cast my eyes over the plains of Uttar Pradesh, stretching out into the haze, it seemed to me that I saw clearly before me the pattern of life which India has been weaving for the last seven years.

Then I began to trace the pattern—not as an active weaver, but as a spectator, detached and critical, against the back-ground of contemporary events.

II

Things do not happen by force of events or of personality alone. There is a mightier force which unfolds itself by means of events and personalities which weaves the pattern of life. And it is that force, again, which, working

through the centuries, led to the most determinative event in modern Indian history: our independence.

Independence did not come to India, as to so many other countries, by revolt or revolution. It came without bloodshed, in friendship between the conqueror and the conquered; in an atmosphere of mutual confidence between the British and overselves. We have been saved from the tortuous fate of Ireland in the past and of Indo-China in the present. We have emerged free, with our institutional continuity and stability unimpaired.

Non-violence was part of our heritage. We were a people with faith in God, so that a non-violent struggle came to us easily. In Gandhiji we saw both the embodiment of our heritage and the apostle of our mission. That was why his appeal for collective action was irresistable.

Independence, achieved in this way, brought not only political freedom, but marked the beginning of an era of expansion for India's soul. With it began our search for the strength inherent in us. As the nightmare of centuries was lifted, it also brought back our self-confidence in India's mission and heritage.

Most of the pattern which we have been weaving has, therefore, been the result of forces released by our heritage. Our outlook has always been characterised by that which the *Gita* describes as: 'In the Self, is the Self satisfied.' 'Al Beruni, nine hundred years ago considered this arrogance. Modern critics might call it insularity; but the bridge which separates self-reliance from arrogance and insularity, has not been crossed. By looking to ourselves for our salvation, we have maintained our strength and vitality even in our worst days.

During the last seventy-five years, we slowly became conscious of our own power to replenish our own inner strength. This accelerated the tempo of our self-reliance. Under Gandhiji, we rejected the strength which comes from violence or dependence on others. *Satyagraha* became a characteristic solution of our ills,

So, when we parted with the British, we discarded not only their political domination, but the desire we might have had for extraneous leadership. The policy which India has since followed is in the direct line of its heritage.

Our ideological roots are our own, and, though the surfacegrowth has been enriched and strengthened by foreign contacts, the sap that feeds it belongs to us. We want no other.

This search for inherent strength is in marked contrast to the policies followed by countries which aspire to a world position. In this great venture of ours we have no 'Big Brother', nor even what may be called a 'senior partner.'

III

During the British period, the political tradition of Britain was engrafted on our way of thinking. Our Constitution in consequence, has come to be based largely on the British model. Even the Government of India Act of 1935, on the lines of which we drew up our Constitution, was largely the product of British political traditions, which in their application to Indian conditions, had become part of ours. Departing from the British precedent we accepted a written Constitution. This was the result of our age-long faith in a fundamental law: *Esha Dharmas Santanah.* Parliamentary democracy and fundamental rights appeared to us as parts of our inalienable *dharma.* And so they continue to do unless some serious political misfortune overtakes us.

A few democratic devices were borrowed from the United States, but we copied nothing blindly. We altered whatever we chose to suit our genius and our needs.

Though the social standards of a decadent age have made for inequality our philosophic outlook has always been egalitarian. From the days of the *Gita,* many doctrines and many sects have laid emphasis on the individual and his innate duty. And when the West brought back

the notions of individual dignity to India, we accepted the equality of rights and opportunities as part of our national outlook.

The unequivocal emphasis laid in the Constitution on equality was our own solution for our ills. In no Constitution in the world has it been so much emphasized as in ours.

We have also emphasized those quasi-autonomous village organizations—the *Panchayats*, which are part of our social and political heritage from ancient times. In keeping to them firmly, we have maintained our own pattern of democracy and fundamentally departed from the traditions of the West. Turkey largely follows the Western model in this respect, while China has adopted the Russian model of collectivized villages.

Since the British left the country, power has continued to be in the hands of one party. But its pattern has not been European; it has thrown up neither ruthless leadership nor unquestioned regimentation. It set up a free Constitution regardless of its own interest. It created fundamental rights for all. It accepted the Rule of Law. In an independent integrated judiciary, it deliberately set up its super-critic and regulator.

The One Party set-up thinks only in terms of all inclusive nation. It acts as a self-chosen instrument of the people as a whole. It operates under conditions of freedom which it has created itself and which all its enemies can equally exploit. It uses no violence; it relies only upon the tenure provided by continuous service rendered from day to day.

Trying its best to stand above class conflicts, caste rivalries and group tensions, it has before it India as a whole; predominantly a farmers' country; a nation whose perennial vitality is replenished by the stable element represented by six crores of farmers. This outlook was reflected in the Five-Year-Plan, when the agricultural sector was made its primary concern. India has deliberately rejected col-

lectivization and industrialization at all costs. No country can keep its foundations stable only by fastening the iron-hoops of a class-conscious leadership from above, and escape totalitarianism.

The pattern of our state, in matters of religion, is typically Indian. It is not a Godless state. Temples, mosques and shrines flourish; religious festivals are freely observed by millions. It is a state in which all religions may be followed freely; where the need of sympathetic appreciation of all religions is constantly emphasized. This religious freedom was achieved by a Constituent Assembly in which an overwhelming majority of the members followed one religion; at a time when the country was passing through a phase of intense religious and communal bitterness; in spite of opposing groups pledged to vigorous proselytization.

This is a typically Indian perfomance; it could not have been done elsewhere; for the majority drew its inspiration from the roots of India's culture.

In the thirteenth century when the armies of Qutb-ud-Din and Illtutmish were destroying thousands of temples in the country, Sarangadeva of Gujarat was, with the blessings of the head of the Shrine of Somnath, giving a grant to a Muslim for building a *misgit* (Sanskritization of *masjid*) in Prabhas Patan itself. The Edict of Asoka inculcates that all religions are to be respected; criticism of religion is to be forborne; the divinity of all religious truths is to be recognised; religions of all sects are to be studied. And long before, thus spake Sri Krishna: "I am the same to all beings. Whosoever wishes, with true devotion and faith, to worship whatever form he likes, it is I that grant him the steadfastness to continue in that faith of his."

IV

Free India's present leadership is English-educated. However, its outlook is not anchored to the political ideology of any other country. More often than not, it turns

for inspiration to the urges of the collective Indian mind. It tries to identify itself with the best in it. It does not look upon the masses as having to be coerced, drilled, moulded and uplifted to a new pre-concentrated pattern.

In the true tradition of India, our present policies have foresworn expansion. According to the Smritis, Bharatvarsha is between the Himalayas and the sea. The Bharat of our present hopes is territorially restricted, but we are quite content with what we have.

India has, in practice, elevated peaceful co-existence into an international canon. In international affairs, she would aspire to be the one 'who harasses none and is harassed by none', a way with which nations, ancient or modern, have not so far been any too familiar. The ideal is difficult to attain. But India has tried to attain it—at least in so far as it can humanly be done in a world of suspicion and distrust.

India, certainly, has the urge to spread her moral and cultural influence outside the country. If there were no such urge, she would deny the mission which she stands for. But there has been no desire on her part, much less an attempt, to bring other countries within the orbit of her power.

India is, what now-a-days is termed, a 'backward' nation. She naturally needs help in money and technical skill, and hopes that foreign countries will not deny her a helping hand. But she will not tie herself down to any single country for it. Her regard for independence, in this respect, is almost aggressive. She resents being offered crutches; rather than have them, she will walk her own way —may be stumbling now and then.

India makes no effort to swing the balance of trade in favour of one country, or one set of countries. At the same time, she places no restriction or limitation upon communications with any other country, except when it singles Indians out as its enemies. Thus we are trying to evolve

a new technique in world relationship which is characteristically Indian.

We borrow no ready-made '-isms'. If we try to achieve socialism, it is different in pattern from its Western or Communist namesakes. We adopt the tried politics of other countries, but never so as to disturb a steady evolution along our own lines.

V

Similarly, though we are anxious to acquire modern technical skill, we do not relish 'tidal waves of learning' from any one country flooding across India. Nor are we prepared to destroy the prestige of our culture, or of the art and traditions that have arisen out of it. While we want to build anew, we do not want to dig up our stable foundations. We are determined to preserve, promote and develop our cultural heritage.

There are nations which have taken to one or the other foreign language in order to achieve quick progress. We, on the contrary, believe that the full growth of our national stature requires a development of our own tongues.

In art and literature also we have accepted the leadership of no single nation. At one time, impact with the West, and particularly with Britain, brought about a new awakening. But during the last hundred years, the Indian Renaissance has been developing steadily, keeping its gaze fixed all the while on the best traditions of its own land.

Though we are anxious to deal with problems in a way suited to the needs of a scientific age, the efforts of our intellectuals—except for a very small group—have never been directed towards breaking the continuity of our historic development. On the contrary, they have done their best to keep the inspiration of the past alive.

We seek no structural relationship with any alien culture. Our collective mind unconsciously revolts against adopting a pattern of life foreign to us. We borrow freely

from others; at any rate, where such loan is essential for our progress; but we wish to remain Indians.

VI

This attitude, which flows from India's heritage and sense of mission, has its drawbacks. It precludes us from receiving short-term benefits from other countries which we might otherwise have. Our progress, in the nature of things, is also not likely to be spectacularly modern, or, to use the fashionable phrase, 'revolutionary'.

It is likely that this choice might, in the race for 'modernization' keep us somewhat behind the countries which have chosen a different path. It may somewhat arrest swift industrialization. It may perhaps keep economy a little old-world, though self-sufficient. It may lead to our temperamental insularity assuming a more pronounced form.

Because of tardy industrialization and a consequent lack of defence equipment, our idealistic approach to independence might, in conceivable circumstances, endanger freedom. But in these days of liberation movements, of arms-aid and foreign-led internal parties, no one can be sure either way as to what the results of a particular policy will be.

But one thing is certain. Whatever we build by following the bent of our genius will be built for immortality. We have chosen the way of self-respect and self-reliance—the true Indian way. India has something to give to humanity. The way in which she secured her freedom and has been organizing her democratic life cannot but have a meaning and purpose for the more struggling, grasping nations. She has therefore to 'be' herself first.

In this way, we hearken to the voice of our past—a voice which, I am confident, will lead us and others, if they heed it to a better world.

Perhaps, indeed, India is leading the way to a world situation wherein nations 'harass none and are harassed by none'.

LURE OF THE FOREST–VANA MAHOTSAVA – THE DEAD MAYANS

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
August, 29, 1954.

AT LAST! I have found a lovely secluded corner in the Naini Tal Government House. It is in the balcony of one of the rear rooms where I can work in tune with Nature. The balcony over-hangs a well laid out garden with a fountain in the centre. On all sides but one, it has a girdle of stately pines through which, most of the time, the fog creeps in and out. The immense volume of green leaves, as it sways in the breeze, creates a feeling of joyous peace in me. In the leaf, the twig and the branch, I find a mysterious world of beauty which can only be compared in its freshness to a young maiden's first love.

I am reminded of the beautiful words of Turgenev:

"And here is the forest. Shade and silence. The stately aspens are whispering high overhead; the long, overhanging branches of the birch are barely stirring; a mighty oak stands, like a warrior by the side of a beautiful basswood ....You drive along the green road speckled with shadows ....The golden voice of the warbler rings with innocent loquacious joy; it blends with the odour of the lilies of the valley .... But now a breeze has arisen, and the crests of the trees have begun to ripple, like waves .... Here and there tall blades of grass are protruding through last year's brown litter; mushrooms stand apart beneath their caps. ....The whole life unfolds lightly and swiftly, like a scroll."

Sometimes a shower serves to change the scene completely. The beauty assumes a different garb: then the rain stops; all of a sudden the clouds disappear, sunshine, fresh and beautiful, pours down from the blue heavens.

On one side I even get a distant glimpse of the lawn,

stretching out as if extending to the hills on the distant horizon. In the middle distance is the three-foot high Hu et Chêng, or, to be more scientific, *Metasequoia glypotostroboides,* which I planted on the 1st of July, 1952. It has still to grow another 112 feet. As I told you in an earlier letter, in the Mesozoic times, 80,000,000 years ago, this tree grew all over the world. Now only a few living specimen are left in China and this tree was brought from there when still a sapling.

II

With the 1st of July 1954, came the Fifth *Vana Mahotsava,* which I inaugurated by planting a magnolia on the Flats at Naini Tal.

How *Vana Mahotsava* has grown since June, 1950, when it became a part of me! I was then on my way to Bombay and writing my first official speech as a Central Minister. All of a sudden, trees were before me: the trees of which the Vedic *rishis* sang: "May the gods, the waters, plants and the forest trees accept our prayers." The trees of Naimisharanya under the shade of which our culture was born. The trees which gave to those who planted them the religious merit of having ten sons for each tree. The trees which Shakuntala watered daily before she took her food; trees, the new shoots of which she would not pluck lest their feelings should be hurt. The *Vat* tree which millions of women have worshipped through the ages to get the blessings of Savitri: an excellent husband, a death before he dies, and children and grandchildren. The trees and groves of Vrindavana and Nandavana.

Then there is *Kalpa-Vriksha,* the wishing tree, our symbol of plenty; the *Devadaru* tree, which, when it was injured, Lord Shiva adopted as a son, and whom Parvati herself nursed; the *Bael* tree, sacred to Shiva; the *Akshaya-vat,* from which the sinner can jump to salvation; the *Bodhi* tree, which threw its peaceful shade over Lord Buddha when he attained Enlightenment; the *Peepul,* daily wor-

shipped by millions as the embodiment of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva; the *Parijataka* and *Tulsi,* so cherished by Sri Krishna and worshipped in numberless homes. His words from the *Gita* came to me: "Among the trees, I am *Aswaththa.*"

And I wrote the appeal to the country to observe the *Vana Mahotsava.* And the country responded wonderfully. A silent chord in its heart had been touched.

III

Old memories crowd in on me.

Having received the call, I began to organise the National Festival. The President, the Prime Minister and Diplomatic Corps, inaugurated the first *Vana Mahotsava* at Rajghat. I talked of *Vana Mahotsava* with varying emphasis. I coined the motto: *Trees mean water; water means bread; bread is life.* I also went about planting trees all over the country: in industrial, overcrowded Bombay; on the sacred Dehotsarga, where Sri Krishna left his mortal body; in the park at Madras and in the precincts of the holy temple at Kanchi. To *Ekambreswar,* the One Lord of the Mango Tree, enshrined there, I prayed that one crore of mango trees might be planted at the festivals.

At the second *Vana Mahotsava* of 1951 it was given to me to draw the attention of the country to the growing menace of the Rajasthan Desert and the immediate need of meeting it. For instance, the desert has begun to encroach upon the Vrajbhumi—the Agra, Mathura and Etawah districts. A few hundred years ago this was a land of beautiful forests and of lowing kine, which had descended from the cows which Sri Krishna himself had herded. Now the Desert had been encroaching at the rate of thirty-two thousand acres a year. Three million acres of first-rate land have already been converted into arid ravines; while another six million acres have only twenty-five to fifty per cent of fertility.

I could scarcely make more than a symbolic attempt to

arrest the desert, when I inaugurated the forest nursery near Jodhpur.

It was at the second *Vana Mahotsava* that I planted trees on the eroded hill-sides of the Hyderabad jungles; in the University campus of Nagpur; on the roadside villages as I motored to Akola; and in Satmatmangala in Mysore, which planted sixty thousand trees and was awarded the first Jawahar Shield.

Since May 1950 many things have happened. The Vana Premi Sangh has been founded. *Vana Mahotsava* has been accepted by our people as a national festival.

Italy celebarted its Festival of Arbor in Rome in 1951; the privilege of presiding over it was given to me. At the time FAO accepted India's resolution recommending all member governments to celebrate the World Festival of Forests.

It was now that the Board of Forestry, embarked upon a co-ordinated effort to recast the whole forest policy. The Wild Life Committee was also organized, though it only began to function in my successor's time.

Just as the first few days of my term of office were connected with *Vana Mahotsava*, so were its last. I left Delhi, on the morning of March the 14th at about the time when my successor was perhaps being sworn into office. On May the 12th, however, there took place, what I consider in one sense, a very far-reaching event. After fifty-nine years the old Forest Policy of India was replaced by a new tone. "A landmark in the progress of the Nation," I called it in the Government Notification of that date.

IV

During the last four *Vana Mahotsavas*, more than ten crores of trees have been planted, a number of foreign countries have adopted the festival and tree-planting has become an essential feature of national life. And this progress has been achieved in spite of scoffers and doubters and men of little faith.

Take Uttar Pradesh alone. In 1949 the Forest Department planted only 4,034 acres. During the first *Vana Mahotsava,* 5,039 acres were planted. During the second *Vana Mahotsava,* the figure rose to 6,317. During the third it went up to 8,871 and during the fourth it reached 11,570. Now, during the fifth, it is proposed to plant as much as 17,000 acres. The Panchayats and the Gaon Sabhas are reported to have planted 5.80 crore of trees. And this year 36,000 villages are going to plant fuel forests, orchards and avenues.

To fight the menace of the encroaching desert in Vrajbhumi one avenue has been planted on the Agra-Mathura road and another on the Giri Govardhan-Barsana road, perhaps on the very forest pathways which Sri Krishna and Radha used when they went to meet each other, for don't forget that Barsana is the village of Radha's father. About 30,000 trees have been planted on the *Parikrama* path of Giriraj Govardhan; in a previous letter I told you how, when I visited Giri Govardhan in 1953, I found it shorn of trees and creepers of which the *Harivamsha* and the *Bhagavata* sing, and how it was given to me to inaugurate the *Vana Mahotsava* there.

Tree-lands have also been established in the interior of Vrajbhumi where the ravines are being reclaimed. In all, 5,295 acres of land and 20 miles of road-side avenues have been planted in these three districts. In the fifth *Vana Mahotsava* the plantation target is 6,700 acres and 28 miles of roadside avenues.

Kalpi is a very sacred place. Lord Vyas, the founder of India's culture, was born there. Now it is all cut up by the ravines of the Yamuna; even the traditional spot, where He is believed to have been born and where I laid the foundation stone for a memorial, there is nothing but a small hill surrounded by extensive ravines. A forest park has recently been opened there.

The sacred Naimisharanya—in Sitapur district in Uttar Pradesh—which once was a Forest University where He

and after Him, for centuries, the great *rishis* lived and taught, has few tree-lands left.

The desiccating power of the torrid winds, which come from the Arabian Sea has stimulated the march of the Desert and rendered even the shores of Saurashtra—once fertile—barren. In these two years, plantations have sprung up in Prabhas, where there was nothing before but sand-dunes.

During this year's *Vana Mahotsava,* we have been planting trees wherever we have been: Naini Tal, Patharchatta, Bareilly, Amausi, Lucknow, Anand and, lastly, in Nava Gujarat, the Bhavan's campus at Andheri, and perhaps some of you might have been present at the time.

Listen to the wisdom of the sages, who knew more about the value of trees than the self-styled wise modern. The Arab proverb says that every one in his life should have a son, plant a tree and dig a well.

The *Puranas* go one better—

"Dasha kupo samo vapi,
dasha vapi samo hridah;
Dashahrit samo putrah,
dasha putra samo taruh."

The man who constructs a step-well earns the religious merit of getting ten wells dug. He who constructs a lake obtains the merit of constructing ten step-wells. A man who has a son, gets the merit of constructing ten lakes. But plant a tree and the merit you receive is the same as having ten sons.

So there you are! On 1st of July, 1950 I had two sons. Then at the above-mentioned rate, ten sons began to pile up fast and furiously for me. I tried to keep count till I had collected the religious merit of having 722 sons. At that point my arithmetic failed me. In five years I can, by right of religious merit, claim numberless sons. For, the *Puranas* can't be wrong: *Dasha putra samo taruh* i.e. one tree is equal to ten sons.

We want trees in order to regulate our rains; to prevent the water running away with the top-soils in our channels and to prevent means of preserving water, for each tree is a dam. The challenge of billions of rain-drops can only be met by millions of tremulous leaves.

Today, even as it is, there is not enough fuel to meet the needs of our population, but trees are being mercilessly cut down every day by needy villagers. With the growth of our population we shall require more and more fuel and that can only come from fuel forests planted in every village.

We have a stupid, short-sighted hunger for agricultural land. In the hills, land is pre-eminently fitted for fruit-trees and forests. But agriculture exhausts the thin top-soil of the hills in a few years' time and we are left with neither forest nor agricultural lands, while erosion of the hill-sides dries up the rivers and converts the plains into deserts.

Recently, I read of the fate which overtook the Mayan civilization in Yucatan. It is a warning to all who neglect forests.

Once upon a time the Mayans were a powerful and ingenius race. A historian has said of them that they were the most brilliant aboriginal people on this planet. They built huge palaces and temples; they were masters of mathematics and astronomy; the magnificent ruins they have left stand as silent witnesses to their material achievements.

The Mayans have disappeared from the face of the earth. Their mighty edifices are now colossal wrecks. In the words of Shelly—

> *"Round these ruins, boundless and bare*
> *The lone and level sands stretch far away."*

'Why?' asks the ecologist. The Mayans discovered maize, the finest and richest foodgrain in the world and cultivated it intensively for centuries. They flourished; they multiplied with vigour; they lived with happy hearts.

The soil, once so rich, was exploited beyond redemption.

Nowadays it has no top-soil left. It is a stretch of bare limestone rock.

The Mayans had no domestic cattle; they had therefore no need for hay or for crop rotation. This meant that there was no manure and no forests; nothing to replenish the soil.

In a thousand years the Mayans ate up the corn; the corn-fields ate up the forests; the corn ate up the top-soil. All that is now left is the memory of a race which once inhabited the earth.

Let us take the lesson to heart; let us realize before it is too late that the climate, the trees, the land, and those who live on it, form a single inseperable collective organism. If you destroy the trees, you may grow more food, but for a time only, and then you lose both food and trees. Nothing but a desert is left on your hands.

India needs 2,000 crores of more trees. Every day we fail to realize this we help to create an insoluble situation.

Even if we plant five crores of trees every year (of which three crores only will survive), by 1961 we shall only have thirty crores. We have a long way to go.

That is why I once said, and say again:

"If I could have my way, I would have a tree planted every time a child is born or a marriage is solemnized, or a death takes place."

Why cannot our Brahmans throughout India be true to their culture and never perform a religious ceremony without having a tree planted?

THE APOLOGETIC ANGEL—THE BHAVAN —THE ANAND INSTITUTE

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
September, 12, 1954.

As our train speeded on from Lalitpur towards Bombay on July, 23, I felt the loss of my friend Mungalal with fresh awareness. Mungalal was a personality in his own right; a small, silent, insignificant-looking man clad in clothes which bore no traces of a *dhobi's* handiwork; nor was his *dhoti* ever so wastefully broad as to cover his knees. But his soul was that of a meek and timid angel, guileless and noble, who moved apologetically in this strange world of men. How he came to be catapulted into the *satta bazar* of Bombay had been a mystery to me.

II

In 1937 my cultural activities were at a standstill. It was a breathing spell in a hectic period, in which going to jail and fighting elections had been my principal preoccupations.

One day Mungalal came, as had been the wont of Shamalshah Sheth, whenever Narasimha Mehta, our great sixteenth century Gujarati saint, prayed to Sri Krishna for help.

Many years before I had fought one of Mungalal's suits to success. I had never met him since. Hesitant and nervous, he told me in indistinct, halting words which had an archaic *marwadi* accent difficult to follow, why he had come.

"Again and again, I have made money and lost it. Now I have made six lakhs. So far I have never given anything in charity; now I want to give away the whole of this sum

and as early as possible. I cannot resist the lure of speculation and I might lose the money before I can give it away. Please help me. People have given me all sorts of advise as to what to do. But at one time you were my advocate. What shall I do with the money?"

When a man asks me what to do with his extra money, I never can restrain my impulse to hug him. In this case I did not have to do it. Mungalal simply did not look as though he had six lakhs. But for his dead earnestness I should have thought this visit was a practical joke.

I did some quick thinking. Since 1932, when I had read the Linlithgow Report on Agriculture in the Bilaspur jail, I had had dreams of building up a new race of bulls and cows—sturdy *Nandis* and generous *Kamadhenus.* Not that I knew anything of animal husbandry, nor did I know much of the Mother Cow, except through the milk which I had been drinking from birth. But, impelled by my dreams, I had helped the parties in a couple of suits to convert old-fashioned *goshalas* into cattle-breeding centres.

I asked, "What about doing something for the cows?" Mungalal looked exactly like a devout worshipper of Mother Cow. "Of course," he said, "I will give the money for the cows. I will see you again." And he felt.

I very nearly forgot all about our conversation. Good fairies had not developed the habit of coming my way with moneybags till then—and none, so far, had worn a *marwadi* turban. Now I know better: no one can beat the *marwadi* when it comes to spontaneous generosity.

Though I did not expect to see Mungalal again, he was back within a fortnight—hesitant, nervous, halting in speech as before. "Sir", he said, "there is some difficulty. The Tata Deferreds have risen since I saw you last. Six lakhs have now become eight lakhs. What shall we do with the extra two?"

I said to myself: this man is certainly pulling my leg. But why discourage a noble thought, even if it be a joke at my expense. "What about Sanskrit? We could start a

school for the study of Sanskrit", I said. "Sanskrit! Yes. That's quite right." And as he went away, Mungalal's face was all smiles.

The eight lakhs, I felt sure, existed only in Mungalal's imagination. But after a few days he returned again, this time early in the morning.

"To-day", he said "is *somvati-amavasya,* the dark night of the month and a Monday; anyone who gives one rupee in charity on this day gets a reward of ten thousand rupees in Heaven. I have asked an astrologer. After twelve noon it will be too late. Take these eight lakhs—six for the cows and two for Sanskrit."

Surviving this sudden attack on my sanity, I asked him where the money was. Mungalal replied: "With my share-broker. We have only to ask him to sell the shares in the open market. Then you take the sale proceeds."

I was in no mood to let the planets cheat me of my eight lakhs. Mungalal took the telephone, rang up the broker and instructed him to sell the shares. I took the receiver from him and told the broker to hold six lakhs in certain names as trustees, including Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and two lakhs in certain other names; Mungalal and I were to be trustees in both the Trusts. When I informed Sardar about this on the phone, he just laughed.

Mungalal instructed the broker to see that the receipts in those names were handed over to me before twelve noon and when they came, I snapped my fingers at the planets.

And curiosly enough that was *all* that Mungalal had on that day.

III

Now that I was proposing to visit the two Bhavans—the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, and the Krishi-Go-Vidya Bhavan, Anand (Institute of Agriculture), I felt sad, for both had grown out of those magic rupees of Mungalal's. No more would I be greeted by his apologetic smile; nor

seen the hand of God in its progress. Whenever needed, He has given it friends who have not spared the time, energy or money, in its service. Sometimes, friends have warned us against the rapidity with which the increasing activities are growing. But who are we to sit in judgment? He alone knows how it should grow. He alone can fulfil its needs.

V

On July, 28 we were at Anand, once a cross-breed between a large village and a small town, now a growing university town with over 6,000 students; with college and institutions of Agriculture, Arts, Science, Commerce and Engineering and a school for 1800 children.

As we entered the campus of the Institute we passed familiar landmarks, the waving fields, the clean roads, the cattle-sheds, the school buildings, the hostel and the office quarters of which at one time I had settled the plans. Now that the monsoon was on, the trees were freshly green.

The growth of the Institute is as romantic as that of the Bhavan.

With Mungalal's six lakhs in our pockets, Sardar and I, with the concurrence of the other trustees, decided to contribute nine lakhs out of the estate of our late friend Mansukhlal for the establishment of a centre of animal genetics in Gujarat. Splendid and beautiful cows, of which I knew hardly anything, had fired my imagination. Animal genetics, a science of which I knew nothing but the spelling, became the object of my ignorant but enthusiastic attention.

In June, 1938, on behalf of the two Trusts, I offered 15 lakhs to the Government of Bombay, of which I happened to be the Home Minister. The Government was requested to give an annual grant towards the proposed Institute of Animal Husbandry to be established in Gujarat, and to hand over the Chharodi Cattle Farm with its select herd of Kankrej cows.

We selected Anand, the best milk yielding area in Bom-

bay, for the purpose. I visited it to choose the lands, and I remember how I surveyed them from the little hillock which now stands in the centre of the horticultural section.

Later, when I visited the Chharodi Farm, I saw for the first time, a prize-winning bull, Megha by name. He looked at me with bloodshot eyes as he pawed the ground with impatient hoofs. When I saw him, I understood why Lord Shankar had chosen to ride a bull. Nothing could be grander, more majestic, more symbolic of generous fecundity than dear old Megha. I think he is dead now. His vast progency, however, forms part of the history of our herd.

On June 29, 1939, the Government sanctioned the scheme, and the Institute of Agriculture came into existence.

We had won the battle at the top level easily, but we almost came to lose it at the lower level. In November, 1939, the Congress Ministry resigned. The top-ranking I.C.S. officers, headed by Sir Henry Knight, hated to hand over so large an institution to the fearsome Sardar, the Chairman of the Institute. The lower officials had never liked to part with the Chharodi Farm, but Sir Roger Lumley, the Governor, stood as firm as a rock.

"Munshi", he said to me "my officers are very suspicious of the Institute; they feel that Sardar will make it into a breeding ground of Congress civil resisters". I, as Vice-Chairman, re-assured him by saying, "I value the scheme on its merits. Whatever happens, so long as I am associated with it, you can take it that it will remain a purely agricultural institute." I am not sure whether he recorded my assurance on one of the files but he issued peremptory orders that the Chharodi Farm and Anand lands should be delivered to us.

Our trials, however, did not end there. The progress was slow; endless correspondence had to be carried on and numerous individuals had to be contacted.

VI

In November 1940, the health of Trivedi, our Secretary, was failing and Sardar and I were likely to go to jail in no time at all. We therefore hurriedly secured a venerable retired agriculture officer from another province to act as our technical adviser and oganiser.

When in March 1941 I was suddenly released from jail on account of serious illness, the Institute was in ruins. Trivedi, almost dying, had left for Wardha. The venerable organiser, though long past his effective days, knew the difference between Knight, a white Adviser to Government and Munshi, an ex-prisoner, and had made his choice. The Government was planning to take over the Institute. But the agreement, meticulously drawn up, was hard to circumvent and the Vice-Chairman was now back from jail.

Recovered in health, I first got rid of the organiser. A strong and loyal man was appointed as Secretary; our Animal Genetist, Dr. M. D. Patel, now Director of the Institute, was temporarily promoted to the Directorship; and when Sardar came out of jail, on June 1, 1942, M.D. was confirmed as Director and Secretary. But soon Sardar marched back to jail, the "Quit India" movement began; and Knight became as keen as ever to take the Institute, or to kill it.

The following year the crops failed and the Institute faced a heavy deficit. Any help from the Government was out of question unless I was prepared to part with the control, and this I had decided not to do. M.D. was brave and resourceful; he threw himself into the work with rare skill and somehow, we tided over our difficulties.

In April 1944, I went to the Governor with an offer which a friend had made to add an agricultural college to the Institute. The Governor visited the Institute and was delighted to see its progress, but he whispered to me that Knight was firm. "There is going to be no College of Agriculture in Gujarat and if there is one, it is not going to be at the Institute." He is gone; the Institute has a college.

VII

In 1946 the change came. The Congress formed a ministry in Bombay and Amritlal Hargovandas, a generous millowner of Ahmedabad, offered a donation for the College of Agriculture. On April 6, 1947, Sardar laid the foundation-stone of its building. But he did not live to see it completed. It was left to me to perform the opening ceremony of the magnificent College building on January 31, 1952.

The experiment of the folk-school has become a great success. Our Kankeraj herd is the best in India and some of the cows, patient, sweet, cheerful, generous of milk; they are models for mothers. The Anand Farm now has 800 acres; the Chharodi Farm, 2200: the Surat Farm, 50. To the Institute has been added the Bidi Tobacco Research Station, the Regional Animal Nutrition Centre and the Artificial Insemination Centre.

The first Ford Foundation Training School was opened and the Pilot Extension Scheme inaugurated at the Institute early in 1952. When I ceased to be a Minister at the Centre, however, they were taken away from the Institute. I do not know whose has been the loss.

Several of the ideas in agricultural development, which I sponsored between 1950-52, such as integrated production, the land army, artificial insemination centres, and the land transformation of surrounding villages, were first tried with success at the Institute. I have now set it an almost impossible target. Five of the students must produce a net profit of Rs. 500/- a month out of five acres!

The Institute is inspired by high ideals. The staff has a sense of mission; the students, enthusiastic and well-disciplined, are soil-minded. An atmosphere of mutual goodwill and devotion prevails in the whole campus. It helps all the surrounding villages. Its influence is felt in the whole district. Its director and staff are actively associated with the District Milk Union, with its 60 affiliated Societies, 15,000 members, and 23,000 buffaloes, which send

85,000 lbs. of milk to Bombay daily and earn over seventy-five lakhs a year.

The Institute does not merely impart education. It is almost a church of Land-Transformation.

LVIII

GLIMPSES OF GANDHIJI—THE MYSTERIOUS INFLUENCE—HIS HUMAN SIDE

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
September 26, 1954

GANDHIJI was the architect of the Indian Nation. He built up a vast hierarchic organization in the country, a feat which, when we remember that it was done by non-violent means, is unparalleled in history. He was, and remains, the supreme spokesman of the Moral Order in a world which has, for many years, been abandoned to brutality.

These are tremendous achievements. What he was, however, was greater than all he accomplished.

Effortlessly, and without he himself being aware of it, he exercised a deep influence over men. This was not the achievement of a mere man, however great he might be. This ability to release the mysterious power of faith is given only to the mystic, the *Yogi*, to someone whose personality owes its strength to a Higher Power.

At the Asian Conference in 1947, I sat next to a delegate from the Philippines. He was waiting for Gandhiji to arrive and I could see that he was a bundle of nerves.

Gandhiji came. The delegate was transported, his eyes fixed on that frail, wizened figure. Some minutes later, he went up to the platform and shook hands with his hero. As he turned to his seat he was aglow with excitement. "It was worth travelling six thousand miles to shake hands

with him," he told me. He had seen a vision of human grandeur.

Once at Wardha, I saw a couple of young girls bathed in tears. They were almost beside themselves. They formed part of the little family which Gandhiji always carried with him. A great catastrophe must, I felt, have overtaken them. I asked them what had happened. "Bapu has decided to go to Bombay without us," was their reply.

For a year or two, my own small daughter was a part of this family. When at intervals she came back to us, I saw that she was what one can only term "love-mad". She talked of what Bapu had told her; of how he admired her curls and of how she brought him his food in the way he liked. She began to pin his photograph above her bed where she could see it every night. It was a case of the madness which overtook the *gopis* when the youthful Sri Krishna played his flute in ancient Vrindavan. But in this case the Sri Krishna was a seventy-year-old, toothless "Micky Mouse of a man" (as Mrs. Naidu called him) who, as a reward for loyalty, gave grinding work, a life of poverty, discipline, imprisonment, even loss of life.

II

His moral influence penetrated deep into the sub-consciousness of people who had not only never seen him but who knew no more of him than his bare name.

When I was in jail in Bijapur in the Bombay Presidency in 1932-33, a sort of wardenship of the political prisoners fell to my lot, and, naturally, I found the vagaries of two-hundred-odd of them rather trying. The worst of them, an illiterate young man of about twenty-five from North India whose favourite pastime was to lower his head, charge another political like an angry bull, and, thrusting his head between the other's legs, try to lift him off the ground. Even if he did not always succeed in doing this, the other man almost invariably fell down.

I had given an undertaking to the authorities that I

would maintain discipline among my fellow-prisoners and I found myself at my wit's end. I called this irrepressible youngster one day and told him with all the solemnity at my command, that I was writing to Gandhiji about his behaviour which, I hastened to add, belonged to everything that a Gandhian should not be.

"And what will Bapu do?" he asked.

"He will go on a fast of course," I said.

"A fast! For how many days?"

"Until you have altered your ways."

"And if I don't?"

"He might even fast unto death!" was my rather wicked retort.

The youngster was miserable. He left me for the moment, but came back next morning and said, "Please don't write to Gandhiji! I won't do it again."

To this boy, Gandhiji was no more than a name, but a name as dear to him as God. He never played his pranks again.

Again, there was Professor Bhansali—Bawaji, as we called him: the silent stoic. His body trained to a superhuman hardihood that was his only possession. It was I who was responsible, at any rate to some extent, for his going on a fast in 1942 in order to secure public enquiry into the Chimur affair in which white soldiers, in their frightful campaign against the "Quit India" movement had been reported as having been guilty of the raping of women. For over forty days Bawaji lay at Wardha, cheerfully inviting death to vindicate the purity of Indian womanhood. At last the authorities began to negotiate and I acted as his intermediary.

Almost at death's door, Bawaji gave me his authority in these words: "I leave you a free hand, but with this injunction—do not worry about by body, let it go, but see that Bapu's reputation does not suffer." Tears came into my eyes as I saw Bawaji's faith in Gandhiji. I have no doubt that, had he died during the fast, he would with his last

breath, like the soldier of Napolean who cried "*Vive l'Empereur*" and then fell dead, have whispered "Long live Gandhiji".

III

There were those who thought that Gandhiji was a tyrant to his adherents, but I was not amongst them.

It was after the Karachi Congress in 1931 that a little incident brought me closer to him. I had rejoined the Congress in April, 1930 and had soon found myself in jail. After Gandhiji came out of jail himself in 1931, I expected that he would accept my services in the spirit in which I had offered them.

But the jealousies which had been roused during the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, had driven various kind friends to circulate the rumour that, while the struggle had been in progress, both my wife and I had worked in the British interest. Those were the days of great tension and a whisper of that kind was a terrible weapon in the hands of one's enemies. Nobody had paused for a moment to consider what motive I could possibly have in changing my independent position at the Bar and in public life for that of an agent of a foreign power. Wherever I went I found that the whisper had been spread in advance. This was my first experience of the law of the jungle which prevails in many of the departments of public life. I was miserable beyond words.

Within a very few hours of his release from jail even Gandhiji himself was told of it. I felt a change in his attitude and sought an early chance of discussing the matter with him.

Never shall I forget that walk on the Hornby Vellard at five o'clock one winter morning. I told him about the campaign that was being carried on against me and he replied that he too had heard the rumour but had not believed it. My mortification knew no bounds. I had come to Gandhiji because of an irresistible inner urge. I

had expected no reward and now, through no fault of my own, I was branded as a traitor.

I remember that while speaking to him my voice was choked with emotion: I am pretty sure that tears of indignation came into my eyes. I told Gandhiji that I should not like to continue in the Congress under the shadow of such a calumny and that I wished to go back to my old life, away from politics.

Gandhiji had the gift of sympathetic understanding. With inimitable sweetness he consoled me. Such calumnies were not uncommon in politics, he said. We all had to suffer and to survive them. In this case, however, he would see that it was counteracted.

On that solitary road, with the sea thundering at our feet and the stars watching over our heads, I realized for the first time how truly great he was.

When we parted that morning, he was no longer just my political chief; he had entered my life as a human being.

IV

In 1941 I felt that though most of us talked on non-violence, we were nothing but ordinary men and women with a new slogan of loyalty to Gandhiji. Then came the first series of Pakistan riots at Dacca and Ahmedabad and Gandhiji gave instructions that no Congressman should defend himself by violent means, nor take violent measures to combat communal hooliganism.

I felt that this was all wrong and as I was anxious to keep my pledge to remain true to myself, I wrote a frank letter to Gandhiji.

I was called to Wardha and we had several long talks together. He advised me to go out of the Congress and to preach the truth as I saw it. I shuddered at the prospect of leaving the Congress: it would mean the end of my political life. But he told me to stand by my own truth. It was necessary, he said, that I should evolve along my

own lines. He assured that he would watch over me as before.

He was very nice about it. In a letter that was published at the time he wrote: "You could not be disloyal to the Congress which you have so well served." I accepted his advice and left the Congress.

After I left the Congress I had my first experience of a self-imposed mission of preaching *Akhand Hindustan*, unprotected by party support. This gave me an opportunity to learn more about parties and personalities outside the Congress.

V

In October, 1945 Sardar, at the request of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, asked me to re-join the Congress and get myself nominated as a candidate from Bombay City for the Assembly elections.

I had been closely associated with the indomitable Sardar since the days of the Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928. To work under Sardar had been, for me, both a privilege and a pleasure. Above all, he was a wise and generous chief. He cheerfully put up with the shortcomings of all who helped him, and stood loyal to them in their difficulties and failures. No doubt, those who crossed him in any way, however, could scarcely look for help to Heaven itself.

This time, I was not reconciled to what he had suggested. My diary note of 22-10-45 runs:

"I walked about in the compound for some time. I tried to conquer *rag* and *dvesh* and surrendered myself to God. And the reply came that I should not re-join unless Gandhiji approves."

When the telegram conveying my view was received by Gandhiji, he disapproved of my being asked to re-join the Congress at that stage. He told S. K. Patil that "Munshi would come to the Congress at the time and in the manner in which he would decide."

I was happy; not to be out of the Congress—but to obey

the mandate from within, which in this case coincided with Bapu's wishes.

Then came 1946, the most fateful of these five years and "the most crucial in India's history" as anticipated by Lord Pethick Lawrence, the then Secretary of State for India. It drew me at once into the vortex of Congress politics.

On February, 13, the day before Attlee announced the Cabinet Mission, Gandhiji asked me to join the Congress. In my letter of February 19, which was published in the papers, I placed myself at his disposal. I went to the office of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee; signed the admission form; paid my four annas.

VI

Gandhiji knew my weaknesses inside out and he invariably let me put my views frankly before him, which was rare in a person of such unbending will.

He watched over my evolution with affectionate interest. When he thought the time was ripe he asked me to come back to the Congress. I cannot think of another masterful world-figure in history who could have treated a follower with such noble generosity.

Gandhiji was superhuman, because he was intensely human. I have seen him in anger; I have seen him controlling it in a split second. I have seen him unhappy and turning to God for strength. And, if he could be adamant as a rock, he was feminine in his abiding affection.

Speaking of Gandhiji's human side, I cannot omit to mention something I really learnt about.

Once an able lawyer himself, he loved to wean lawyers from the profession. When I came out of jail in December, 1933, he asked me to give up my practice. I could not accept his suggestion, for, as I told him, I considered the profession of law no whit less honourable than any other., I also loved economic independence; nevertheless, I had already decided to subordinate my practice to what-

ever public work I might be called upon to do. He was content to leave me at that.

When I went back to the Bar after leaving the Congress in 1941, I had, naturally, to carry out my professional obligation to appear for those industrial concerns for which I held general retainers. Complaints went up to Gandhiji when I appeared against the I.N.T.U.C. in a case before the Industrial Court and he sent me a message through Sardar not to appear against labour.

I explained to Sardar how I was regulating my professional activities. As long as a lawyer was in practice, his professional obligations demanded that he should not deny his services to those who retained him, unless, for personal reasons, he could not do justice to their case. Whatever happened, he could not go against those who were retaining him. With regard to the I.N.T.U.C., however, though I held it in great regard for it was both national and non-violent in character and played to no foreign tune, I agreed to abide by his wishes.

Later on, I placed the matter before Gandhiji himself, and though he would have liked me to accept his view, he let me have my way of regulating my practice. So long as I had not decided to withdraw from practice, I could not abjure professional obligations. Nor did he allow this difference to come in the way of his treating me with the old consideration. I was grateful for this indulgence.

But it was only the other day that I discovered the overwhelming kindliness which lay behind his generous treatment of me. The following is the English version of the material part of a letter he had written to Sardar in this connection, and which has recently been published:

"Call him and tell him this, that if he appears at all, he should appear on behalf of labour; he cannot appear on behalf of mill-owners. So far as I have understood him, he has resolved not to stick to the profession. He is out to serve the country; he would take a special case only if that was offered to him. He would be blameworthy only

if he started practice like other lawyers. I clearly understood him to say that he was not going to be absorbed in his practice. He has gone out of the Congress under the clear insistence of a moral duty. Except for this, he belongs to the Congress. In my opinion, by leaving the Congress he has become more of the Congress, like me. I have found him to be straight-forward. He understands things of the heart. He has the spirit of self-sacrifice. He keeps himself open to correction. If that also be your impression of him, call him and talk to him frankly. We should conduct towards him as if he was a Congressman." (4-10-41).

VII

But this was not generosity. It was non-violence in action, in fact love. H—was a masterful follower of his, closer to him than many others. He controlled a large organization. Already married, he fell in love with an unmarried girl. Gandhiji himself told me the story about how he treated H—.

"I asked him to confess the truth. Ultimately, he did. The next day, at a public meeting, I told the audience about H—'s lapses. But I assured him that I would not forsake him. I have taken charge of the girl and she is now in hospital, where she has been delivered of a child. I will look after the mother and child. H— is now here with me, looking after me. In no other way can he be saved from public disgrace. Love is not a knot that can be cut to pieces by a sword!"

As he spoke, the far-off words with which yet another Prophet had forgiven the sins of Mary Magdalene, echoed in my ears.

LIX

THE NAGAS – THE ORDER THAT SHANKAR FOUNDED – ITS ACHIEVEMENTS

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
October 10, 1954

AT THE Kumbh, the Nagas–weird, unclothed sadhus–provided an element of mystery, drawing men and women like magnets.

Nagas never interfere with the affairs of men; they do not seek followers, nor permit anyone to touch their feet; and if these members of a pretero-historic cult were at the Kumbh, it was only to go through the traditional ritual of their sect.

Foreigners were there, too, with their cameras, to snap the Nagas, whom they thought to be the symbol of India's degraded culture. The Westerner has very little right to quarrel with devout persons who offer worship to a Naga once in twelve years. What with his love of nudist colonies and cabarets, with his pictorial magazines full of actresses shamelessly flaunting their flesh, with his seaside resorts, where mass nudity, thinly covered by swimming costumes, holds its week-end *melas*–he should never forget that a reverential glimpse of John the Baptist is any day more ennobling than a gloating stare at the limbs of Salome.

Three miles away from Jhusi was the Nagas' Camp, where each one occupied just enough space into which to fit his body. Each morning they came to the *mela* and collected their daily food from hospitable camps. They spoke to no one; they made no contacts; they came and went uncompromisingly detached.

I missed seeing their camp. Hansdevji, who was a *persona grata* with them, said that no previous preparations should be made for my visit, for, if the Nagas came to know that I was coming, they would disappear into the

forest. The authorities, on the other hand, said that they were unwilling to take the risk of not making previous arrangements. So nothing happened.

Most of the Nagas go without clothes on ceremonial occasions only. Some of them, however, adhere to their vows of keeping no possessions.

The cult of the Nagas has a pretero-historic ancestry. It must have been founded when Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were no more than swamps. The famous Mohenjo-daro seal depicts Pashupati sitting naked and being worshipped by animals. The Vedas refer to the long-haired ascetic. Lord Shiva sitting on Mount Kailash, almost naked and besmeared with ashes, is their appropriate guardian diety.

Monastic orders of such ascetics existed in India long before the dawn of history. The Greeks, when they came with Alexander, met the naked philosophers, the Gymnosophists. Buddha and Mahavir were in fact leaders of two Orders of monks who later spread their doctrines. The *Digambars*, the Nagas of the Jain persuasion, are still found in many parts of India.

II

Most of the Nagas belong to the *Dashnami Sampradaya*, organized by Shankaracharya—the oldest, the biggest and the most effective, of our monastic Orders.

On initiation, the *Dashnami*, as the very name indicates, is given a name combined with one of the ten words: Giri, Puri, Bharati, Van, Aranya, Parvat, Sagar, Tirth, Ashram or Saraswati. The initiate has to take strict vows not to indulge in more than one meal a day; not to live in inhabited quarters; not to beg for food from more than seven houses; not to sleep anywhere but upon the ground; not to salute, nor to praise, nor to speak ill of anyone; not to bow to anyone but a sannyasi of a higher Order; not to cover himself with a cloth, unless it were a *bhagwa*—brownish-red colour.

Like other Orders, it has its learned sannyasis, who

enjoy spiritual leadership; its Yogis, who specialize in Yogic practices; its *Mahants*, who look after the temples, monasteries and *Akharas;* as well as its ordinary sadhus and lay members, called *Gharbari Gosais*, who marry and follow normal vocations in various parts of the country, but are pledged to the glory of the Order.

The *Dashnamis* are divided into two sections: the *Shastradharis*, who specialize in sacred lore, and the *Astradharis*, who specialize in arms. The sannyasis are ranged in four ranks: *Kutichak, Bahudak, Hansa* and *Paramhansa*—the last being the highest. The fighting wing is organized into *Akharas*, and, in the past, played a historic role.

III

Shankaracharya, who reorganized the Order, was a marvel, even in this land of profound seers and mighty men.

In the eighth century, India was passing through one of its worst periods of distintegration. Empires which had held political life together, were being broken up and foreign elements had disorganized the social order. Buddhism, with its overcrowded pantheon and gross *Tantric* rituals, had been gaining ground for over a century.

However, new values were being forged with which to release the creative impulse. Shaivism, the most powerful and most ancient of our religious forces, was on the march. The *Shiva-Agamas* had acquired the sanctity of the Vedas. The influence of the Pashupatacharyas had been growing throughout the country. Most of the kings were Shaivites: temple-building on a large scale was becoming a national act of faith and Vedic sacrifices were being revived.

In this new resurgence the ascetic Orders who had kept themselves aloof from Buddhism, maintained the purity of *dharma* by means of a life of detachment. A member of one such Order, Govindpad, a man of encyclopaedic learning, was living in a cave at Omkar Mandhata on the Nar-

mada. In A.D. 796, there came to him an eight-year old boy, the son of Shivguru Vidyadhiraj, a Brahman of Kaladi in Kerala, and of his wife Sati. This prodigy had already mastered the whole range of scholastic learning, and, in pursuit of a glorious vision, had given up the world to come to the master.

Flashing dark eyes and a face glowing with intelligence; unsurpassable command of learning and logic; a firm unbending will and the impassioned zeal of an apostle—armed with these, the boy must have spoken as one possessed of authority, with the confidence almost of an *avatar*. And the old master would have seen in the young pupil the hope of a new world.

In a few years the master taught the boy all he knew, initiated him into the Order, and, with humility confessed: "I have nothing more now to teach you." The boy had acquired complete maturity in philosophic profundity and had composed a commentary on the *Brahmasutra*, well-known as *Shankarbhashya*, one of the most notable contributions to human thought. He had delivered a devastating blow, as much to the Godless nihilism as to gross ritualism of the time.

On the master's death, the young sannyasi—not yet out of his teens—went to Banaras, challenged the learned pandits in that home of learning, and discoursed on his new aggressive doctrine, with inspired zeal. He was soon hailed as an *avatar* of Shiva. Disciples flocked to him.

Shankar was not merely a prodigy of intellect; he had a prodigious soul. When he tried to ward off an untouchable in the streets of Banaras, the man told him: "You claim to see God—Reality—everywhere; yet you think I am impure." Shankar saw in the unknown sweeper Lord Shiva Himself and said: "*na me jatibhedah*—'not for me is the distinction of caste, for I am Shiva, the Bliss-Consciousness.'"

Shankar then went to the dying Kumaril Bhatta, grim opponent of Buddhistic scholarship, and enlisted his admiring support. Later, he sought out the formidable Mandan

Mishra at Mahishmati and had a prolonged dialectical battle with the great scholar, with his learned wife Saraswati acting as Arbitrator. In the end, the scholar accepted Shankar's views and was initiated in the Order.

Shankar's all-conquering tours throughout India have come down to us in the *Shankar Digvijaya.* Tradition says that he also travelled to Greater India, from Balkh to Cambodia. But the *Digvijaya* leaves many most important things about Shankar unsaid; how he attracted learned men; how he influenced the masses; how he organized a powerful monastic Order; how eminent men found self-fulfilment in following him; how thought, faith and rituals came to be revolutionized; and how, in an all too short a lifetime, he came to occupy a premier position as philosopher, inspired apostle and unique leader of men.

If there was ever an empire-builder, Shankar was one. He had no armies, no money, not even a political battle to win. Yet he founded and left an empire of the Spirit which still flourishes.

In A.D. 820 he cast off his mortal body at Badrinath. He was then only thirty-two.

Testimony to the tremendous contemporary influence of Shankar comes to us from Cambodia. King Indra Varman of Kamboja (A.D. 878 to 887), while installing the image of Shiva in Prasat Kandol Dom, thus describes his guru Shiva Som: "He learned all the *shastras* under Lord Shankar, before whose lotus-like feet bowed the heads of those scholars who had come to him like bees."

At Sringeri, the headquarters of Shankar, there are statues of Vyas and Shankar, the latter receiving a message from the former. Nothing could be more appropriate. Shankar carried forward the torch which had been lighted by Vyas, that first and greatest prophet of *Arya Dharma.*

IV

Shankar restored *prasthanatrayi*—the *Upanishads,* the *Brahmasutra* and the *Gita*—as the fountain-sources of our

spiritual life. Pashupat Shaivism lost its grossness. Kashmiri Shaivism took shape. Horrid rituals gave place to detachment, purity and the sense of unity with God.

No succeeding thinker in India has escaped his influence —positively or negatively. The *Dashnami Sampradaya*, the hierarchy which he built up, has continued to function. The Kumbh, his triennial congregation of faith, still flourishes.

During the Era of Resistance, the *Dashnami Sampradaya* led the movement against vandalism, persecution and religious and cultural onslaughts. *Paramhansa* sannyasis were the spiritual guardians of *dharma*. The Yogis kept alive the torch of mysticism. The Nagas, by their mysterious asceticism, maintained uncompromising tenacity. The *Astradharis* of the fighting wing, defended shrines, women, cows and the social order.

If Uttar Pradesh, the old *Aryavarta*, has preserved continuity of tradition with regard to its shrines, sacred places and religious gatherings, it is largely due, apart from the learned Brahmans, to two Orders—the *Dashnamis* and the *Naths*.

The sagas of the *Dashnamis* are recorded in the songs and stories of the cult. One record says:

At Banaras-*kshetra*, a battle was fought at the *Jnan Vapi* (the sacred well in the Vishwanath Temple), Raman Giri, Lakshman Manni and Deshgiri Nakkhi, fought the Raja Haridas Kesari; Hari Maharaj Maha Muni (and others), performed deeds of valour. Ghanshyam Puri planted the *Rup Bhagwa* banner; Dharam Puri Harihet played the drum. Bishambhar (and others) held the peacock fan; Jugendra received the honour; the branch of Narayana Bans held the mace. Thus, by this victory, did they enhance the glory of Kashi.

In 1664 the *Dashnamis* fought the army of Aurangzeb on the site of the Temple of Kashi Vishwanath from sunrise to sundown. Their heroism knew no bounds. "They

defeated Mirza Ali and Turan Khan and preserved the honour of Vishwanath's seat."

V

In the middle of the eighteenth century, what was left of Akbar's empire was supported in name only by warring factions led by feudal barons.

In 1751, the Bangash Afghans marched on Oudh, the territory of the Nawab Wazir. They slew his deputy Nawalrai, captured Lucknow, his capital and invested Allahabad, his next most important town. The Afghans were ruthless. Allahabad was sacked; houses were set on fire; four thousand women of good family were captured. Lacking the support of either the Emperor or the army, the Nawab Wazir remained powerless at Delhi. Allahabad was expected to fall at any moment. Then a miracle happened.

Rajendragiri, the *Dashnami* leader, rose with his fifty-thousand Nagas, to the rescue of the sacred Prayag. He had been driven out by the Marathas from his fortress near Jhansi, and was camping in the open space between the old city and the Fort. Every day, as Ghulam Hasan has recorded, he set out with the bravest of his Nagas, mounted on excellent mares. Unafraid of the cannons they galloped to the camp of the Afghans, massacred as many of them as they could and brought away their arms and horses.

These fierce onslaughts by the fanatical mystics gave a new turn to the situation and Allahabad continued to defy the besiegers for months. In the meantime, the Nawab Wazir retrieved his position at Delhi and marched on Farukhabad, while the Afghan chief, abandoning the siege, rushed back to defend his capital.

Rajendragiri was God's gift to Safdar Jung, who had no other friend left. He continued to be the right-hand man of the Nawab Wazir till the 15th of June, 1753, when he died at the hands of an assassin employed by his patron's enemy.

The *Tarikhi-i-Ahmad Shahi* says: "After the death of Rajendragiri, Safdar Jung never went personally into any battle. When this fearless figure died, none were left on Safdar's side eager to fight.

On Rajendra's death, his disciples Anupgiri and Umraogiri, inherited the leadership of the Nagas, who continued to serve the Nawab Wazir of Oudh till the death of Shuja-ud-Daulah in 1775.

A curious sidelight is thrown upon the times by the career of the Nagas of U.P.

At Mathura in 1756, Ahmad Shah Abdali indulged in an orgy of arson, massacre and loot. His Order ran: "The city of Mathura is a holy place of the Hindus. Do your utmost to leave nothing in that kingdom and country. As far as Akbara-bad leave not a single place of standing." The order was obeyed, between Agra and Mathura lay nothing but a charnel house.

The Nagas fought madly in defence of Mathura against the overwhelming might of the invader. It is said that for seven days the waters of the Jamuna ran red with their blood. Hundreds of them were mercilessly decapitated. At Gokul four thousand of them stood unflinching in defence of the shrines. Two thousand lost their lives, but the shrines were saved.

In 1761 Ahmad Shah Abdali again descended upon India bent on crushing the resurgent Hindu powers. The Nawab Wazir rallied to his support at Panipat; the Nagas followed him to battle and fought the Marathas. The Hindu armies were crushed; their ambition to establish an empire was shattered. But when the dead bodies of the Maratha generals, Vishwasrao, Sadashiva Rao Bhau and Santaji Wagh, were being cremated, with obsequial rites to the chant of Vedic *mantras,* the Giris stood guard with their Nagas lest the Afghans should defile the sacred pyres!

What perversion of values? The Nagas could not associate the spiritual role of their Order with the military victory of the Hindus. And the Marathas could not convert

their conquests into a sweeping popular crusade of resurgent Hinduism.

The Giris played the game of the time to which honour was unknown. They worked their way to power through ceaseless intrigues and military adventures; through constantly shifting alliances and betrayals. In 1775 their master, Shuja, died; his successor broke with them and they began their adventures on their own account.

For fifteen years the Giris sometimes fought and saved the Emperor. They sometimes resisted and aided the foreign invaders, the Nawab Wazir, the Afghans, the Jats, the Marathas and the British by turns. By the end of the century, however, Anupgiri had become the faithful ally of the British. After the Battle of Kalpi in 1804, he became—thanks to the foreign conqueror—the *de facto* ruler of Bundelkhand. In the same year he died at Kanwara. His earthly remains lie buried in a tomb two miles away from Banda.

What a time! Since the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 the land had fallen to pieces. It was in the grip of wicked adventurers who in pride and arrogance, bestiality and base intrigues, slew each other. The people were either gun-fodder, or worms trodden under the heels of oppression. They had to toil under the lash of aliens or local chiefs, neither of them better than the other. Their castes were their only fortresses; their gods, their only strength. Only the saints, priests and poets, stewards of their glorious past, kept alive the hopes of redemption. Patiently and with undimmed faith they looked forward to the day when God would come to them on a steed as Kalki and rescue them. Some day, they thought, the promise will be kept; "Whenever *Dharma* is overwhelmed I descend on earth to re-establish it."

VI

By the beginning of the nineteenth century British rule had been firmly established. Religious freedom was already

in being, so that military adventure in defence of religion was no longer necessary. There was another danger however. In the wake of the British came the proselytizing activities of foreign missionaries and the beginning of the Westernization of Indian youth. Such was the social and cultural stagnation indeed, that the Westernized lost sight of India's past greatness and the orthodox had no capacity left with which to draw fresh vitality from it.

The *Dashnamis* prepared themselves to meet this new danger. The Sannyasis, in their own right, toured the country, teaching, inspiring and enabling the orthodox to re-vitalize their faith and helping the new generations to appreciate and interpret *dharma*. The *Mahants* established centres of ancient learning and maintained the traditions of the Order.

The Order has to some extent contributed to the broadening of the spiritual outlook of the country during the last one hundred and fifty years. But its appeal has mostly been to the static, not the dynamic groups of the society; and those groups have been thinning.

The Banyan tree has somewhat preserved its ageless vitality and its shoots have been acquiring a more massive structure and new vigour.

In the early years of the nineteenth century a blind *Dashnami* sannyasi named Virjananda burnt with zeal to save the *dharma*. His young disciple from Gujarat caught his guru's fiery enthusiasm and spent a lifetime in building up a powerful revolt against religious and social decay and political bondage. His mission found its fulfilment, first in the Arya Samaj, then in the broadening spirit of Hinduism which his impact had aroused. It was left to Gandhiji after fifty years to fulfil the programme that Dayanand had been the first to plan.

Totapuri was a contemporary of Virjananda Saraswati. Ramakrishna, his disciple, restored the mystic vitality of the *dharma*, purging it of its sectarian dross. Under his inspiration, religious, educational and philanthropic insti-

tutions have been founded. Missionaries—the most famous of whom was Vivekananda—have gone out into the world. *Dharma* has re-assumed its universal aspect, and, has found expression in the integral gospel of Sri Aurobindo.

A new situation, however, is before the Order. The *jagirs* are going, if they have not already gone. The occupation of the military wing is finished. The ranks of the pious donors who supported the Order have thinned. The Nagas—these "mocking masks of skin and bones"—are no more than fossils of a culture which desintegrated ages ago.

Will Dayanand, Ramakrishna and Aurobindo be only founders of new sects or impart a creative impulse to the spiritual life of India?

LX

A POPULAR ROMANCE—THE EARTH'S DARLING —HIS TRAGIC END

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
October 24, 1954

I AM often asked about what I consider my best novel. To the novelist, all his creations are equally lovable and all are equally disappointing, for none fulfils his idea of what it should have been. But of all my works of fiction, one of the most, if not the most, popular has been *Prithvi Vallabh*, 'Earth's Darling', published in 1920. More praised and more condemned than all other novels, it has held the largest audience of them all. Apart from quite a few editions in Gujarati, it has gone into Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Tamil and Kanarese. It has also gone on the Gujarat professional stage and survived about thirty years; on the silent screen in a popular Minerva Movietone production.

This novel is based on the few surviving verses of a twelfth century old Gujarati historical romance in poetry called *Munjarasa,* and on *Munja-prabandha,* a section in the well-known fourteenth century work, *Prabandha-chintamani.* Dealing with history, I described Munja as a "quivering flame of beauty" in my *Glory that was Gurjara-desa.* He ruled the Paramara Empire from A.D. 974 to 997, which then comprised Malava and considerable parts of modern Gujarat. Great conqueror, builder, lover, his accomplishments have drawn fulsome tributes from many contemporary poets. Some of his verses also are found in several works. A contemporary poet, Padmagupta, author of the *Navasahasankacharita,* thus bids Munja farewell:

"Thou, source of joys voluptuous,
The crest-jewel of kings
Home of nectar which is gentility
Ocean of wit, Oh Lord.
Thou might of Ujjayini!
Thou wert the god of love to maidens fair,
Oh! brother unto the righteous,
Inspirer of noble arts—
Where art thou?
Wherever thou art, Wait:
I am coming."

II

Now listen to the modern version of this ancient romance if you have not read it.

Munja, the great Paramara conqueror of Malava, who had routed Tailap, the king of Telangana, eighteen times, is finally vanquished, taken prisoner and brought to Banyakhet, the capital of Telangana (Malkhet near Hyderabad). The novel begins at this point.

Telangana, in fact, is ruled by the elderly Mrinalvati. A powerful woman, she has brought up her younger brother, Tailap, in the stern code of austerity which she

follows herself. As her word is law in the realm, she has cast the life of her people with puritanical fervour in the same dreadful pattern. Theatres have been closed; music banned; gaieties banished; poets, musicians and artists sent into exile. Manyakhet is a joyless city, where laughter is a crime and joy a sin. Mrinalvati believes in blessedness, not in happiness. She does not want to govern; she wants to save the soul of her people.

The supreme moment of her life comes when Munja, the arch-enemy of Telangana, is brought in chains to the capital. As the royal prisoner is seen walking majestically in the glittering procession—not as one vanquished but like an invincible immortal—the hearts of all beholders are drawn to him. His magic smile moves even Mrinal to an unfamiliar mood. She decides to subdue Munja's mind and spirit; for, as rumour has it, he is the very essence of depravity; and to bring him to the path of righteousness would be the crowning achievement of her life.

On her first visit to the prisoner's cell, Mrinal tries to impress upon Munja what a wicked life his has been; she upbraids him for his depravity and tries to wound him by cruel words, but, as she makes little impression upon the gay and fascinating royal prisoner, she feels disgusted with herself.

Munja, realizing the imperceptible change in Mrinal speaks to her with bewitching effrontery: "You committed a great blunder when you decided to meet me", he says, "You come to win me and now you are won yourself. But do not worry, Mrinalvati. There is no greater happiness than to be won in this way." Mrinal, her conceit wounded, leaves him in a rage, cursing him for what she calls his "lewd thoughts". But the foundations of her self-confidence are shaken.

To humiliate the royal prisoner, Tailap places him in a wooden cage and exhibits him in the public square of the city as if he were a wild beast. But Munja gives the people of Manyakhet what they have been deprived of:

charming smiles, sallies, songs, and the feeling of unending joy. To the joy-starved citizens he appears as messenger of love and light, and his laughter and songs prove infectious.

III

When next Mrinal visits Munja in his cell, her face is a mask of sternness. The doors of the cell, enveloped in gloom, are flung open; the torch is fixed by the guard in a bracket in the wall. Mrinal then enters the cell. Gradually, as her eyes become used to the surrounding darkness, she sees Munja lying in a corner as unconcerned as ever, his chin cupped in his hands. Languidly, he raises his glance and says sweetly: "Welcome, most welcome! In fact, I was waiting for you".

These commonplace words are uttered in so tender a tone that the armour of frigidity which she wears begins to fall from her, link by link, piece by piece.

"Waiting for me?", Mrinal asks indignantly.

Prithvi Vallabh, still reclining on the bare floor, replies: "Yes, I *was* waiting for you. I was sure you would not fail to come". And then he adds: "Mrinalvati, are you well and happy?" His voice is full of strange music and, as she can see even in the dim light of the torch, his eyes are full of a careless gaiety.

Concealing her perturbation, Mrinal says: "I have come here for one purpose, and one only: to save your soul. It is so sunk in sin. I want to set it on the path of righteousness."

Munja replies coolly that no one can save another.

Mrinalvati touches her forehead with a gesture of despair and asks: "Can one not do good to others and save them, Munja?"

But Munja answers: "I too have rescued the poor; made the miserable happy; though never, never, have I done it for their benefit. I did it for selfish ends. Doing them good made me immeasurably happy; it fed my vanity; it filled my mind with joy. I knew the truth; you do not,

When you make a fuss about doing good to others, you satisfy only your own vanity—nothing else."

When Mrinal proposes teaching him absolute purity, Munja raises his head proudly and says: "Absolute purity! Mrinalvati, only the impure have the need to become pure. What can you teach me? You are the daughter of a king. You have been reared in comfort and luxury. In your vanity you believe yourself perfect. But, in fact you are intoxicated with self-righteousness. How can you possibly teach me?"

With a mocking laugh he continues: "Go forth and teach those who are unhappy, who are imperfect. Unhappiness does not touch me. How can you teach me, then? What is there for me to learn?"

As she comments on his conceit, Munja says solemnly: "Call it conceit, if you must. But do you know what my life has been? I was the child of a destitute woman, abandoned in a forest. Today I am the 'Darling of the Earth' (*Prithvi Vallabh*). Wild lionesses have fed me with their milk; elephants have fanned the air for me. At times I have begged in the streets; at others, I have given away thrones by way of gifts. I have risked my life for the afflicted and have torn the happy to pieces. I have revelled in the charms of lovely maidens and have beheaded girls as beauteous as Laxmi. I have studied the Vedas; have walked the way of ascetics, difficult even for the gods. I have composed love songs. There has been no delight which I have not tasted. What more do I want?"

Munja throws his head back and pauses before replying. His face is as beauteous as the evening sky, when all the stars are shining. He gazes intently at Mrinal for a while and then says softly: "In spite of the way I have lived, Mrinalvati, I have always been happy. Impurity has never touched me, nor unhappiness. What can you teach me?"

Mrinal stands speechless. Her throat is parched, her mind blank.

When Munja speaks again, it is with affectionate con-

cern. "It is you who have to learn, Mrinal. You do not know the joy of life. You have yet to discover the mystery of the ecstatic dance. . . ."

Mrinal raises her hands angrily as if to interrupt him, but ignoring her gestures Munja goes on: ". . . .of the joy in a lover's arms. . . ."

Gritting her teeth, Mrinal shrieks: "Villain!"

Munja laughs, stands up, and, coming very close to her, murmurs: "You have yet to gather the gems which are churned up by the ocean of delight." Raging with fury, Mrinal breaks in crying: "Devil! Shameless brute! You will meet your fate tomorrow".

But Munja continues to smile: "Very well, go, if you like, but do not forget that I shall be waiting for you tomorrow evening."

Mrinal turns upon him furiously: "Waiting for me!"

"Yes, I have still to teach you many things."

"Rascal, your tongue has to be. . . ."

"My tongue! What is the matter with it?" exclaims Munja mockingly. It has won hearts as proud and stubborn as yours. There is no salvation for you except in loving the Earth's Darling, Mrinal, and in being loved by him".

Seized with uncontrollable fury, Mrinal strikes Munja in the face. Unabashed, Munja takes her in his arms, draws her close to him, and before she can say a word, plants a kiss on her quivering lips. Mrinal shrieks as though she has been stung by a bee. Her eyes are wide with fear and wonder and she trembles violently. Prithvi Vallabh faces her, gazing at her tenderly while a smile plays on his lips.

Mrinalvati calls the guard and gives orders that the hand with which Munja has caressed her is to be branded with the point of a spear.

Ranamalla obeys, but Munja does not move a muscle as the red-hot iron touches his hand. As the horrible smell

of burning flesh spreads through the prison cell. Mrinal cries: "Enough! Stop!"

Munja speaks in his usual cool way, but a trifle scornfully: "Is that all? Had I known that you would be pleased with only this much, I would gladly have offered my whole arm to be branded. He adds drily: "Come tomorrow, Mrinalvati, you will have to nurse this wound."

Mrinalvati leaves, but with a heavy heart and an uncertain tread.

IV

Mrinal is not quite the same after this interview,—something has happened to her which she fails to understand. She feels as though she were floating in a warm current which flows past the distant stars; as if long years of penance were being rewarded by some strange self-realization. The very idea that Munja might be killed by her brother upsets her. After a long struggle with herself, she ultimately goes to Munja and confesses: "I came to capture you, but, alas! I am captured myself".

Running parallel to the main plot, there is a sub-plot relating to the struggle of the Yadava king, Bhillam of Syundesh, to throw off the suzerainty of Tailap. Bhillam's daughter, Vilasvati, falls in love with Rasanidhi, the poet, who is also a prisoner and who is in reality Bhoj, the nephew and heir-apparent of Munja. Brought up in the stern school of Mrinal, Vilas has not known what love is, but she awakens to that glorious dawn when Rasanidhi opens her eyes to the splendours of poetry.

Rasanidhi and the other poets of Malava arrange for Munja to escape through an underground passage, but, when Rasanidhi comes to him in his cell, he refuses to escape so soon. Mrinal has fallen in love with him, and, as a true lover, he will not leave the prison without giving her a chance to fly with him.

Rasanidhi and his friends depart in despair. "Is he a

man?", asks Bhoja on his return from the cell. "No, he is a god", retorts his friend Dhananjaya.

When Mrinal visits him again, Munja begs her to escape with him to Avanti. She suffers a terrific mental conflict. Shall she go with Munja, or can she devise some means of keeping him in Manyakhet for ever? She is older than Munja and not beautiful, and he might meet women in gay Avanti who would make him forget her.

Before long she reveals the plot to her nephew Satyasraya, Tailap's son. She wants Munja to live, but as a perpetual prisoner at Manyakhet, where she can meet him every day.

Now that the plot has been discovered, Tailap is furious and Munja is transferred to another cell.

Rasanidhi, or rather Bhoj, runs away with Vilasvati and Satyasraya follows them. The two men fight a duel and Satyasraya is overpowered. He flies, but, before doing so, cuts off the head of Vilasvati who had been pledged to him by her father, and who had preferred Rasanidhi to him.

Bhoj and the rest of the poets escape from Manyakhet, leaving Munja to his fate. So also do the Yadav Bhillam and his wife, forswearing allegiance to Tailap.

Filled with loathing at his sister's fall and Munja's wickedness, Tailap decrees that Munja be led from door to door with a begging bowl and then be put to death in the public square under the feet of an elephant.

Munja is led through the streets of Manyakhet in chains with a beggar's bowl in his hands, but the ardour of his spirit is undamped and his poise undisturbed. Supremely indifferent to the terrible fate that awaits him, he moves among the admiring crowd, radiating joy and winning escstatic admiration.

Tailap is happy. Before long his bitterest enemy, the cause of his sister's fall, will be no more. Mrinal, standing near Tailap in the public square, is in inexpressible agony as Munja approaches her with the beggar's bowl with the tenderness of the lover that he is.

V

Inexorably, the story moves to a sombre end that may best be given in the words of the novel.

"Are you happy, Mrinalvati?" asks Munja and the longing of a man who has met his beloved after long absence is in his voice.

Mrinal cannot return the smile at once; but the magic of his smile and voice is upon her; at last she smiles—slowly, sweetly, though sadly. Her eyes are wet with tears and the glances of the lovers meet as if in an embrace.

Everyone is as if in a trance. They all catch their breath as the Darling of the Earth extends his beggar's bowl to her. At the same time, he asks tenderly: "What can you give me now? You have given me all you could".

These words have a maddening effect on Mrinal. A hurricane sweeps over her spirits. She forgets her misery, the occasion and the place, and looks at her lover as she has never looked at anyone before.

Munja says: "Beauteous one! Do not be afraid. The world is both wicked and stupid. It would always remain so. But you have made your life a thing of beauty and joy; let the world say that it likes."

Mrinal forgets herself—forgets the presence of Tailap; forgets the spectators; forgets even her own dignity and reserve. She throws away the pot in which she has brought the alms to be given to Munja and falls at his fettered feet. "Forgive me, my Lord! Darling of the Earth!", she cries, "I have proved to be your murderer." And she places the dust from Munja's feet on her head.

"You, my murderer", replies Munja. "Why? My death was determined at the very moment of my birth. You have nothing to do with it."

Tailap springs down from the platform on which he is standing and drags Mrinal away. The citizens and the soldiers stand with tears in their eyes.

Munja turns to Tailap and asks: "What is the use of

making this poor woman a victim of your wrath against me?"

"Be quiet, low-born!", says Tailap.

"Why should I be quiet?", Munja asks with a smile. "It is for you to be silent. Your triumph is at an end."

Tailap is so enraged that he cannot utter a word.

Munja, his face glowing with power, looks round and says loudly: "Fool! Can you never see the truth? My nephew Bhoj, bold as a lion, is on his way to occupy the throne of Avanti. In Syundesh, Bhillam, once your feudatory, is no longer your friend, nor my enemy. Your sister —all your subjects—are not yours, but mine. Whose has been the triumph—mine or yours?"

Tailap retorts: "This elephant of mine will show you who has triumphed", and leaving Mrinal on the platform he comes forward.

Munja laughs aloud: "Will it be your triumph? You wanted to bend me to your will; I will die as unyielding as ever. You prided yourself upon your righteousness, but you will have committed the heinous crime of killing a king. Who is the conqueror?". And Munja's voice is full of a contempt which is heard by the whole crowd.

Tailap bites his lips; his eyes have a poisonous look. "Soldiers!' take him where he should be," he commands.

"Why worry?", replies Munja, "I am going there myself."

So saying he steps majestically towards the elephant. All eyes are fixed on him. Everyone holds his breath.

Quietly, Munja walks ahead. Tailap and a few soldiers follow him. He comes and stands near the elephant for a while. On Tailap's orders, his fetters are removed.

Munja, now freed, stands erect and pushes back the locks which hang over his forehead. He then turns his face towards the people and towards Mrinal. In his eyes is no fear, only the light of love. His sweet smile, tender as a caress, plays upon his lips.

The people shudder at the prospect of his death. Men and women begin to sob. Mrinal looks on as one dazed.

The soldiers with faces set grim and hard, go on performing their duty mechanically.

"Tailap", says Munja quietly, "Just see! Is not the stage a fitting one for the 'Darling of the Earth'?"

As Tailap stands with his lips compressed, despair suddenly steals into his heart already full of hatred. He begins to feel that his enemy, even in the very moment of his death, has triumphed. He had hoped to see Munja's self-confidence shaken.

"Come! Or, I shall call my men to do their duty", he cries furiously.

Munja looks with contempt at Tailap and steps near the trunk of the elephant. There he stands, hesitating for a second. Tailap gets the chance he has been waiting for.

"Are you frightened?", he asks.

"The earth will crash before its 'darling' trembles. Fool! I was also thinking. . . ."

"Of what?"

"Only this", Munja replies looking up with pride and his eyes full of longing: "I was only thinking of poor Saraswati (Goddess of Learning). When I am gone, Laxmi (Goddess of Wealth) will go back to Vishnu. Shri (Goddess of Victory) will repair to Kartikeya (God of War). But Saraswati, poor Saraswati, she, and she alone, will not know to whom to go!"

Saying so Munja turns his back on Tailap with inexpressible contempt and addresses the elephant as if he alone counts: "Best among elephants! Prithvi Vallabh, best among kings, has now come to you."

The elephant stands as if in deep thought; then playfully waves its trunk, which Munja has been softly rubbing. Ultimately, with perfect composure, he clings to the trunk. The driver pricks the elephant with his goad; twirling its trunk round Munja, it lifts him off the ground.

The elephant raises its trunk and lowers it again and again. The people, with tears in their eyes, see Prithvi Vallabh smiling, his eyes flashing with pride, looking like

Sri Krishna, standing triumphantly in the coils of the serpent king, Kaling.

The elephant snorts and gives one swift swing to its trunk. Munja's war cry resounds triumphantly *'Jaya Mahakala'*.

The crowd stands horror-struck. Mrinal's piteous shrieks ring out, piercing earth and heaven with wild grief.

Munja, for a moment, disappears under the foot of the elephant. The animal puts the foot down; presses it hard; a cracking sound is heard. Then silence....

The body of Prithvi Vallabh lies on the ground, crushed and flattened.

LXI

THE CONSCIENTIOUS GRAND-UNCLE—THE SINGING PAIR—THE GAY SARKAR

RAJ BHAVAN LUCKNOW,
November 7, 1954

IN my letter No. 46 of April 18, 1954, I gave you an old portrait of Kishordas Munshi of Munshi Heights. If you remember, in an autobiography written in Persian, he described himself as an 'atom of ignorance' before the 'ocean of knowledge', his *ustad*. His were troublous times. When the East India Company took over Broach in 1804, in a couple of centuries it saw for the first time peace and settled government.

Broach changed hands, but the Munshis of the Heights continued to flourish as always.

Jugaldas, son of Kishordas, himself a Persian scholar by taste and revenue farmer by profession, helped the British in settling the affairs of the district.

In 1806, Jugaldas's son, Kishandas – my great-grand-

father – is known to have served as a Persian writer in the newly constituted British courts at Broach. In 1814 he was enrolled as a lawyer. In 1831 he was appointed to the office of a civil judge – 'Principal Sadar Amin' as he was then called – a prize-post for Indians in those days of British Rule. According to Sir John Romer, then Chief Justice of Bombay, who had known him for a quarter of a century, Kishandas 'was an excellent and most useful public servant.'

The British Empire was not founded by the Britishers alone; it was also founded by thousands of Kishandases, who, for a petty judgeship or a condescending line of appreciation, helped to build up peace where there had been chaos before.

Kishandas was a successful lawyer. He made money, built a mansion on the Heights, acquired agricultural land, and was honoured by everybody–the caste, the town and those new *nawabs*, the British officers. When the last *sati* joined her husband on the funeral pyre in Broach, it was he who stood at the head of the worshipping crowd of citizens. He died at Thana on July 27, 1832.

II

Kishandas's eldest son, Kashiram, could never forget that he was a 'Munshi' and papa's son. He lived the whole year round just for one blessed day. And what a day it was! The finest dress had to be kept ready for him: two brand-new *dhotis* with red borders from Nagpur; two red turbans; two well-tailored, washed and ironed *angarkhas* of the finest *mulmul* from Surat, which was forty miles away, and that could only be reached by a bullock-cart travelling for days. But to my grand-uncle duty was demanded of each passing hour. Nothing prevented him from discharging his duty on that day as on all the other days of the year.

To prepare for the day, he would buy three or four long reeds and a knife as sharp as a razor. And every morning, for days together, he would sit assiduously cutting the reeds

into pieces, turning them with infinite care into pens. He had but one object: on that great day, his signature must be a thing of beauty and joy for ever—at least for a year.

All these tasks kept grand-uncle mighty busy: "Is the turban well bound? Are the reed pens ready? Which one has the finest point? What about the bullocks? Has silver-paper been applied to their horns? Has a new covering been fixed to the carriage? Are the wheels properly oiled?" So would the queries run.

The great day would arrive. Grand-uncle would get up early, bathe, perform his *puja* and put on his clothes with meticulous care. Everyone would rush hither and thither with excitement. Kashirambhai was going to the court; no light matter, this; every-thing must be just right.

At last, to the joy and relief of the family, grand-uncle would get into his shoes with their long curling points; collect the best and sharpest reed pens; summon the family clerk and wait for the auspicious moment fixed by the family astrologer. Then, stepping down from the Heights with appropriate majesty, he would mount his glistening carriage. The bullocks, richly caparisoned, would then take him to the court. Everyone in the Heights would know by now that Kashirambhai was going to perform the most herculean task of the year.

He would arrive at the government offices and the revenue officer, duly apprised, would accord him a hearty welcome. He would next occupy a seat of honour and would select a reed pen; then, with meticulous care and solemn determination, he would perform the great deed of the year which was to inscribe in the register, Munshi Kashiram Karsandas, his own signature.

His duty done, he would smile beatifically and the clerk would then receive from the treasury one-hundred-and-fifty rupees, the annual Munshigiri allowance, the gift from the great Mughal Emperor.

My grand-uncle, his face wreathed in smiles, would then salute the officer, leave the court, take his seat in the

carriage and the bullocks, fat and sleek, their bells jingling merrily, would make for home.

The great deed was done. Or, was it? The very next day grand-uncle would begin to think of the preparations necessary for a similar feat to be performed the following year.

III

Anupram (1807-1841), the youngest son of Kishandas Munshi, was a veritable Harishchandra, for he had the reputation of never having told a lie. In fact he shines as an ideal man in the family annals, brilliant, steadfast, honest beyond comparison.

He joins the family's favourite forum, the law court, at Broach. In 1836, he is already a Reader to the English District Judge, a post of great consequence in those days. At thirty, he is appointed a Native Assistant to the British Resident at Baroda. At that time, English officers were held in semi-divine awe as being mightier than the great Mughals, and the Indian world could contact them only through their all powerful 'native' readers and assistants.

With unusual integrity for the times, Anupram rejected the offer of a bribe made by the Gaekwad and worked hard for the Company by acquiring the Rewakata and Mahikata Agencies. The Gaekwad lost his territory and the Company, appreciative of Anupram's services, was anxious to confer on him the *jagirdari* of a village. However, he died suddenly, poisoned, it was said, by the Gaekwad's men. The Company's sense of gratitude shrank rather fast. It granted to the widow and the two sons of their faithful officer the magnificent pension of twenty-five rupees per month! The rupee, however, had great value in those days, and life was simple.

The Munshis of that generation were lovers of music. Some of them were experts. Anupram himself was a fine singer and as he sang in company with his *ustad*, his little sister, Tapi, his pet, mastered classical music merely by

sitting behind the screen in her brother's house in the Baroda Camp.

In those days for a respectable lady in Gujarat to sing anything but *bhajans* and wedding songs, which were always in rather doubtful taste was anathema. Classical songs were only permitted to professional women.

Tapi's husband was himself an accomplished musician. They also lived on the Heights, and, whatever their desire to sing together with full-throated ease, they did not dare to defy the canons of decent behaviour which the proud Munshis prescribed for their womenfolk.

One night it began to rain, and rained very hard. The propitious moment presented itself. Tapi and her husband forgetting everything in the ecstasy of the moment, began to sing together. Suddenly the rain stopped. The two voices—one rich and powerful, and the other sweet and melodious – sounded in a duet through the silence of the Heights. Rubbing his eyes, Kashiram jumped up from his bed. Anupram made for the balcony to discover where the music was coming from. Narbheram, the youngest brother,—my grandfather of whom more hereafter—woke up and began to beat time with his hands. The womenfolk heard the duet, recognized the voices, and, thoroughly scandalized, sat up in their beds. Abruptly, only too conscious of their fearful lapse, the two vocalists stopped singing.

Next morning, with tremulous hearts, they came out of their house. Goodness knew what was in store for them! The brothers, however, overwhelmed the sister with compliments and chaffed the brother-in-law good-humouredly. But after that day my great-aunt was accepted as the exception, which proved the rule that decent women should not sing classical music in the presence of men.

IV

Anupram's son, Hardevram (1834 to 1903) is the great link which binds me to the past of Munshi Heights. He

was perhaps the first Munshi to be sent to Bombay to study at the Elphinstone Institute, the English High School, which had recently been founded there by the British. Having passed out from the Institute, he went in for teaching, then for the law, and later he was appointed a Munsiff.

His portrait, which is impressed upon my memory, is of the time when he was the receiver of the famous shrine of Ranchhodraiji at Dakor in Gujarat. He was then sixty-five.

As he is going to the shrine for *puja* – as he did every day–he carries a silver *jam* and *achamni* in one hand. Behind him comes his servant carrying his white shawl. As he comes out of his house, pilgrims, collected for a dip in the sacred waters of the Gomati, prostrate themselves before him. Sarkar's face lights up with benignity and he stretches out his hand in blessing.

His handsome pinkish face was fairer than that of an ordinary Indian. His shapely sensitive nose; his large brilliant eyes; his well-kept moustaches and the sacred braid on his head, which is neatly tied in a knot, make him the very image of dignity. The three lines, sacred to Shiva, painted in sandal paste on his forehead; his spotless white sacred-thread, flowing down from his left shoulder and across his well-knit chest; his white *pitambar*, spread in graceful folds right down to his feet, invest him with sanctity. Many a handsome old man have I seen, but none so elegant, so noble-looking, so fascinating a specimen of beautiful old age as the Sarkar, the epithet by which uncle was mostly referred to.

The Sarkar was very fastidious in the matter of clothes and food; his highly-trained cook and his personal servant were more formidable to us, the members of the family, than Jeeves. In those days when the dhobi's iron was not in vogue, the folds of his *dhoti* were invariably pressed before he put it on, with the aid of a big conch.

His meals were invariably surrounded with a rare ceremonial importance. Before he sat down to his meal, the

room had to be made odoriferous with sandalwood and scented sticks and the floor had to be decorated in various designs of coloured powder. The *patlas*, the wooden-seats, had to be set with due regard to precedence. The food had to be well prepared and served in a perfect order. Vedic *mantras* had to be chanted before the meal and it ended with a short prayer. Finally at the end came '*Hara har Mahadeva*', the battle cry of the Hindu warriors and the joyous shouts of victory after the Brahmans had made a hearty feast.

After the morning meal came the siesta. The Sarkar's linen and bedsheets had to be spotless. Creases were never permitted. In summer, *khaskhas* screens hung before the doors and windows, rendering the room cool and fragrant.

But even the Sarkar had his friendly Pucks, who could break into his ceremonial life with impunity. My father – I was with him at the time – was once his guest at Dakor, when two of his old school friends – both of them respectable, white-haired, retired government servants – had come for a visit. One day, the Sarkar was taking his usual siesta, when a tile was softly removed from the roof of his bedroom, and cold water poured on him through the opening. He woke up, thunderous in his anger. There was uproar in the house. As I rushed to the scene, I saw two white-haired old men, an empty pail of water in the hands of one of them, climbing down from the roof. How they rated the Sarkar and how furious he grew!

The afternoon was usually spent by the Sarkar in listening to *Yogavasishtha* or *Mahabharata*, read by a pandit. Then visitors arrived, the conversation turned to art, literature or philisophy and the Sarkar sprinkled his talk with apt quotations from English, Marathi, Hindi and Gujarati poems.

At first I was very much impressed with the Sarkar's scholarship, but as I grew older and became familiar with Shakespeare and Bhartrihari, I discovered the secret of it. His stock of quotations was limited, but he used them with

art, taking care to see that he did not repeat the same one before the same audience.

With the evening came the community prayers for the family and their friends: prayers in Sanskrit, Tukaram's *abhangas* and Hindi *bhajans*; till, finally, the famous hymn of '*Achuyatam Keshavam*' was rounded off by the *dhun* of '*Raghupati Raghav Rajaram*'...

V

After the last meal of the day, the Sarkar held a sort of *darbar* which was mainly devoted to music. He employed an *ustad* and a *tabalchi* in the house, and he himself had the reputation of being a master of classical music. Everyone said that he was the equal of the Goswami Maharaj of Kankroli, but what degree of skill was possessed by the Maharaj, I could never find out.

One thing was certain: the Sarkar was madly fond of music. Once a terrible blow befell the family. The Sarkar's grand-daughter of ten years became a widow. In those days when widow re-marriage was unthinkable, it was a calamity indeed.

When fate plays one of its cruel tricks, the shadow of grief lies over the whole family. A dancing-girl from North India arrives on the Munshi Heights to pay her respects to the Sarkar, whereupon he is furious. He roundly berates the girl. "Don't you know that our house is on fire?", he shouts at her.

"Sarkar, I have heard of the sad happening", the dancing-girl replies with folded hands: "What a tragedy! Even men like you are not spared by the vengeful God. But I have not come on a professional visit. Goswami Maharaj of Kankroli has sent me here. He said: 'Go to the Sarkar; sing a song for him and hear him sing one. You will never find another musician like him.' So I have come all this way. I am but the dust of your feet."

The Sarkar's heart is heavy with grief. His love of music is insistent; 'the dust of his feet irresistible. Not to

hear her would be an affront to the goodess Saraswati herself.

The Sarkar turns to his nephew and tells him in a whisper: "Go, house this girl in a *dharmashala* and provide the necessaries for her." Then he speaks loudly for everyone to hear: "Oh Ranchhodraiji!, Lord Krishna! This is not the time to listen to songs. You have been very cruel. The poor little girl has become a widow. I am Thy servant, Lord."

Quietly, he turns to his nephew when they are alone and says: "The *shastras* enjoin that calamity should be borne with courage. This calamity has come all the way from North India. We must put up with it. Go and get plenty of grass-bundles; stack them round the walls of the stable, so that the sound is muffled. Bring the girl there at two o'clock in the morning. We shall hear but two songs of hers, and no more; and sing but one song, and no more."

But this was history. By the time I heard the Sarkar singing, only quivering notes issued from his throat. Once I was playing on the verandah, while he was singing inside. Without realising the consequences, I imitated his way of singing which sounded to me like that of a wailing woman. My grand-uncle heard me, stopped singing, and thundered: "Who is this boy? Catch hold of him." I bolted before the servants could lay their hands on me, but I was to receive condign punishment: I was never to acquire any knowledge of classical music.

VI

The Sarkar was never to be caught behaving in an unceremonious way. If he went to dine at a friend's, or even with the caste, two servants would precede him to make special preparations. If he paid a condolence visit, he timed his arrival at the appropriate moment and sympathised with the members of the bereaved family in choice words and with apt quotations. His eyes would grow dim; his face would turn crimson; he would shed tears

in abundance. Then he would withdraw, heavily laden with sorrow, yet superior. The by-standers would admire his noble heart, and the grief of the disconsolate family would grow light.

On one such occasion I went with him, but when I returned with him to our house, he turned round to a servant and said: "What a fuss! The old father has three sons. What does it matter if he has lost one?"

I was shocked. I was very green at that time.

The Sarkar was at his best at festivals. He would gather his friends about him. We children would be crowded into a conveyance drawn by bullocks, which would proceed with jingling bells, to some garden outside the town. An excellent dinner would follow after which we youngsters would play in the fields. The elders would discuss every subject under the sun, crack ribald jokes and sing songs, some of which were in fearful taste. I remember some of the snatches even now.

If ever there was a mortal who believed that the world was a stage and he an actor on it, it was Sarkar. But the role he played was not unmixed. He loved life and was gay to the very tips of his finger and whatever he did, he did with all his heart, to impress, to cut an appropriate figure and above all, to enjoy life.

His was such an end, as a man of his parts least deserves. During his last days he lay stricken by paralysis, unable to move or to speak and wholly dependent upon a favourite servant. Presently, his grandson, in a fit of his temper, dismissed the servant. The tragic look in the Sarkar's eyes, as he lay on his death-bed, wretched, paralysed, helpless, unable either to speak or move, haunts me still.

LXII

READING SCRIPTURES—THE GITA—THE WRONG AND THE RIGHT APPROACH

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
November 21, 1954

THERE are ways and ways of reading books, journals, detective stories, classics and the scriptures. But all serious reading, particularly of the scriptures, has to be done earnestly. I will tell you how our scripture, the *Gita,* has to be read; as a matter of fact, what I say about the *Gita* should apply to any book if you want it to be a source of inspiration.

II

Readers of the scriptures are of various sorts. I had a friend who was fond of collecting books by purchase or by loan from friends and libraries. At the first impression, he seemed almost an encyclopaedia. He appeared to know almost everything about every book you could name and he could give you a list of good books on any subject on the slightest provocation. At the same time he seemed not to care to reap anything at all out of his apparently vast reading and he never wrote anything but trivial and friendly letters. Nevertheless he was a good talker and could easily lead you to confess that you did not know a tithe of what he did.

We were in jail together for a few weeks, during which time he saw me reading the *Gita* every day. Once when we were together for an hour or two, he told me of editions of the *Gita* of which I knew nothing, and when we parted, he gave me the latest book on the *Gita* to read. He had glanced through the prefaces and contents of several books and had armed himself like a salesman with all the good points of the ware he was exhibiting.

Talking of readers. One of my companions in jail, Shri Y – was a wonderful reader of, or rather listener to, the *Gita*. Though a Hindu he had never read the *Gita;* he knew nothing of Sanskrit, and cared hardly at all for inspiring literature. As we talked on diverse topics, I discovered that jail life had worn out his nerves, induced irritability and deprived him of sleep. He had come to the conclusion that, for no fault of his own, everything in the world was wrong. In order to divert his mind I began to talk of Yoga and of unwavering peace and asked him to read the *Gita*. Suddenly he snapped his fingers and said: "Come, just tell me what this *Gita* is like." I went to his cell and talked to him generally of Sri Krishna's message. Next day he said "Munshi, last night I got some sleep. You must read the *Gita* to me every day." So we fixed a special *Gita* class for 4 p.m. daily.

Needless to say, my friend would not read the *Gita* for himself, but listened attentively as I read and explained the verses to him. His dialectical mind soon became interested.

"How can you have *titiksha* – endurance?" he asked. "If you forego pleasure, your senses will be dulled; you will lose your susceptibilities; the capacity to enjoy will be lost."

When we came to the verse "Duty is your right," he commented, "Pure nonsense! He is only playing on words." When I explained to him the words "Dedicate all actions unto Me and fight," my friend promptly came out with the comment, "Your Krishna demands slavery."

In this way we went from canto to canto, day after day, to the Sardar's great enjoyment, for he walked to and fro on the verandah during the time we were busy with our reading.

One day the Sardar said: "Munshi, you did not read the last canto of the *Gita* properly. Sri Krishna says, 'Do not give My message to the man who is not devoted to Me, nor

to one who is not prepared for self-discipline or who ridicules me.' Why are you doing this?"

"The reason is simple" I replied. "Y — tries to show that in reading the *Gita* daily I am more or less of a fool and if I am a fool, then all of us who read the *Gita* are fools also. That gives him happiness and sends him to sleep every evening. Why should I deny him his sleeping-draught?"

Some readers of the *Gita* find the world dreary; others, interesting. Some, again, find the world satisfactory without worrying about any higher values. Success is all that these seek; they never consider what others are feeling. Their sole object is to get as much pleasure out of life as they can. As they read the *Gita*, they think they are entering into a bargain with God: "Give me money, prestige and enjoyment, my dear Sri Krishna," they say. "In return I will spare ten minutes every day from my absorbing worldly activities, to read Your message." Such a reader is interested first and last in himself; to him the *Gita* is a race-card with which to secure winnings on the race-course.

There are many who cannot read the *Gita* except to feel satisfied with themselves. They close their eyes to things as they are afraid of pain or sorrow. They do not trouble their heads with any of the higher aspects of life. They read the *Gita* to acquire the prestige which a nodding acquaintance with God generally gives.

III

The person who reads the *Gita* as a piece of literature is a careful reader. His object is to study the language; to find out what words are used how many times; to trace the ideas which conflict and those that coincide; to ascertain how many interpretations are possible; to decide which was the original *Gita* and what were the later interpolations.

Such a reader reads the *Gita* anatomically. He reads it

to criticise, to analyse. He pursues some social aspect of the scripture as if it was a human limb he was dissecting. He has no special love for the *Gita;* he would find equal pleasure in a dissection of *Kama Sutra,* the Manual of Erotics, or *Shringara Manjari,* the text-book for hetaerae.

Such reading is my abomination. It may bring knowledge of a kind, but it can never convert knowledge into light.

When a pandit reads the *Gita,* he is not concerned with deriving any benefit for himself, but to gain admirers. He only develops the cruel desire to give you endless quotations from different *Shastras.* His aim is to overwhelm you by a bewildering weight of authorities.

There is, of course, the philosopher who peruses the *Gita* in order to follow some line of thought; to discover some particular region of the mind about which he wants to know all that can be known. His aim is to develop a clear and definite mind along that particular line and he compares, expounds and uses his utmost ingenuity to complete his theory of what the *Gita* has to say.

IV

There are many well-intentioned readers who read the *Gita* with the ethical motive of self-improvement. This is sound. They belong to a class of men who are anxious to teach their students pure ethics divorced from religion, to make them moral. But when you use a scripture as a text-book on morals, you miss the sense of mystery which makes the reading of a scripture a source of power.

Nothing noble or useful can come out of such a reading of such a scripture; it will leave the reader just as he was. In reading the *Gita* the one thing necessary is to maintain a sincere and humble outlook. Then only one can see how much of one's life is interwoven with failures and frustration, with so much that is hard, painful and sad.

When I read the *Gita* in this light, I discover that life is meant to be so interwoven; for all that is best and beautiful

in thought, personality or achievement, springs from suffering or struggle. The noblest love comes to those who have passed through trials. An integrated personality is the outcome of sorrow and self-discipline, of efforts which have failed and ambitions which have been shattered. The noblest in us comes to the surface only when we are face to face with death, solemn and awe-inspiring.

In order to read the *Gita* in this spirit, we need not so much go in search of unhappiness as take the dark things of life into account. Arjuna doubts, despairs and fears. Like a craven, if you please, he shrinks from duty in the face of struggle. The prospect of seeing those whom he loves or respects killed on the field of battle, makes him tremble. He is terror-struck when the Lord declares: "I am Time come to destroy men." He is shocked on being told that "the wicked must be destroyed so that *Dharma* may triumph." Ultimately, however, he is made to face all these things: to read the secret of those eyes that are fiery with malice or dim with fear and to meet those foes whose lips are set with anger and the lust to kill. Only in the face of such experiences, does he surrender himself to God and become His instrument.

It is only by reading the *Gita* in this way, that our outlook can be charged with wisdom and our imagination inflamed by fundamental aspirations. Truth ceases then to be intellectual and becomes light.

It is at this point that by the reading of the *Gita* the mystery surrounding us becomes less impenetrable. Problems which till then we had found complex become easy of solution. Things which minister to our convenience lose their value and there emerges a new vision, as of the snow-clad Himalayan range glittering in the sunshine when you reach Kausani. It is a vision of subtle emotions suddenly grown purer; of intimate personal relationships which we had never thought possible before; of aspirations rising one above the other, peak on peak; of beauty, love, righteousness, freedom, self-realisation; all of which are more

vital to our well-being than the vast laws discovered by science.

V

When you read the *Gita* again and again, as all scriptures should be read, the words begin to grow in you, the nervous system is stimulated; the contstant repetition of some appealing verse transforms our mental content and makes the spirit more articulate. Then it is woven into the texture of our mind and spirit. If we feel down-hearted, one of the oft-repeated verses will rise to the surface in the shape of a mandate and we will find in ourselves a new hope. If we find ourselves in difficulty, a clear direction will vibrate through us and we will see our way clear.

Now we feel a new strength which can confront failure and sorrow, frustration and despair with courage. Beauty sinks into our soul. We share the vision and the faith of those in whom the human spirit has risen superior to suffering, weakness and death.

We must, therefore, read the *Gita*, not in order to acquire knowledge, but to see the Light which burns within us. When we have attempted this, we find it better to wonder than to know, to aspire than to be satisfied.

When this state of mind is reached, simplicity and courage begin to grow. Material ambitions and fleeting emotions appear unreal. Through silence and peace we come face to face with God.

It is then that the hazy half-forgotten memories of childhood materialise as articulate aspirations. The self, of which one was so sure a moment ago, is no more than a bubble that has burst. One feels but an instrument from which a fresh, unfamiliar music wells up, swept by a Presence which can translate a jarring existence into a concord of sweet sounds.

Such a mood does not lead us to withdraw from toil, nor from suffering of affections. It sends us back to active life with renewed hope, zest and vigour and with a desire to

see, feel and achieve beautiful things—the first step towards the dynamic unity of our powers.

As we recite the *Gita* again and again, we become for the moment tolerant, patient and forgiving; egoism falls away from us. Our hearts develop the power to pity the weak and to befriend the desolate. We admire all those who are noble, serene and strong.

It is at such moments, when we are enveloped in an atmosphere of wide calm that we find living a joy. A moment of ecstasy follows. We feel and experience that we are His. All that we have to do is to obey His will. We then begin to live in the work of the moment, which becomes an humble offering to Him as if it were a beautiful flower.

You should, therefore, read the *Gita* with the one purpose, that a sense of beautiful mystery should gather around you. Its significance will then shine within you like a star that will reveal to you the beauty and strength which are hidden within yourself. And as the mystery grows, you will be led to self-fulfilment.

LXIII

OUR HERITAGE IN ACTION—THE LAW OF GOD —INDIAN CULTURE

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
December 5, 1954.

PANDITJI'S tour of some of the countries in South East Asia set me thinking on the vitality of our culture. I would like to share my thoughts with you.

Undertaken by one of the greatest statesmen of our times, it was a great mission; it might even prove a turning-point in history. But I cannot look upon his mission merely as

a diplomatic one, but as one that has projected those forces of culture which have sustained India throughout her history on to the screen of modern international affairs.

If we develop the habit of thinking of things as being continuous in time, we shall see how our spiritual heritage is connected with this mission. But for that heritage, the foreign rule of centuries would have found us broken. But for it there would have been no Indian Renaissance; no Gandhiji; no non-violent transfer of power. But for its powerful hold on our masses, the peaceful transition to freedom would not have been possible; nor would it have been possible to establish a free working democracy in so smooth and prompt a manner.

But for the patient and deeply religious attitude of our masses, which has been induced by that same heritage, it would not have been possible to maintain a stability which has been denied to many other countries; nor could we have a state of things in which every religion is freely followed without conflict; nor would our non-alignment policy have become an instrument of peace; nor again could we have put forward that collective strength which is dedicated as much to honest ends as to honest means.

In all such matters we must try to look beyond personalities and immediate causes to the cultural forces which, throughout the ages, have been operating in the life of India.

There can be no doubt that our thinkers and saints have held the view that this has been the sacred land of *Dharma*. Vivekananda, Besant, Tilak, Aurobindo and Gandhiji were all agreed that India has had a holy mission in history.

India has never parted with God. Indians have never claimed that man is the maker of his own Maker, Who is to be kept away at will. But the West has denied Him: the aim of its cultural mission is not only material prosperity, but a materialism which denies or ignores God.

The momentum which this denial gave to the West ended

in World War I, for, throughout that war, the great Indian leaders of the day stood steadfast in their faith in God.

When that war ended, the West did not settle down to the ways of peace, but continued to pile up arms. The violence which had swept over so many countries became for them an article of faith. During all those years, one man—Gandhiji—stood steadfast in his faith in God, and in doing so, he was the representative and the spokesman of the heritage of India.

World War II went far to destroy the combatant nations, but our faith in God and His Law remained. For the first time in history a man of God achieved a miracle in international politics: he achieved the freedom of India.

In fact, from 1914, when World War I broke out, till the Cease Fire in Indo-China, a period of forty years, the West banished God from its counsels and tried to readjust the world without His help.

The League of Nations failed to bring peace and the United Nations has found itself in stormy waters. If the Western world ignores God, the Communist world positively denies Him. Alone of the peoples of the world, the people of India have faith in God and His Law.

II

In March and April of this year the world was on the brink of a terrific crisis. The U.S.A. was ready to intervene in Indo-China.

If the West had intervened and action in Indo-China had failed, it would have been a war of the West against Asia —a disastrous moment for humanity.

But the final step was halted and Mr. Dulles openly complained that India had vetoed the British policy.

Why was India so important? It is not rich; nor even militarily powerful; yet because of India the world felt the presence of God in the affairs of men.

It is to be feared that none of the statesmen who attended the Geneva Conference had faith in God, nor any desire

to fulfil His ways. Each one was bargaining to the best of his ability. But the imponderable law and the inarticulate influence were there and they accepted that voice of peace which is the Law of God.

From Geneva has emerged the doctrine of co-existence. When coined by the Communists the word was intended to convey that, being on the eve of collapse, the capitalist world was ready to be dissolved by its internal convulsions; that co-existence between the U.S.S.R. and the capitalist world would alter the balance in favour of the former and that the great day was at hand when the world would be swallowed up in an international revolution.

The doctrine of co-existence, as it emerged after Geneva, led to the concept of those Five Principles for which India stands. This concept is based, as I conceive it, on the Law of God, which is that the welfare of all men is the concern of everyone on earth and that the true outlook in international affairs is, to use the words of the *Gita:* "Harass none and by none be harassed," which translated into political terminology means 'non-aggression and non-interference."

Thus, the Law of God has been set working.

III

I know that what I am writing will not be accepted by the historians or the scientists or the politicians all of whom are busy about one thing, namely, trying to run the affairs of man without the aid of God. The materialistic interpretation of history, psycho-analysis, doubts and denials, have been woven into plausible theories which have rendered our existence purposeless. Recently, however, we saw a witness of truth—not a saint nor a mystic, nor even a man of God. Toynbee, the greatest of modern historians, has, after the most profound and exhaustive survey of history, discovered something which we Indians have known for centuries.

He rejects the fashionable view of the historians, economists and missionaries of materialism, that religions are

cancers of civilisation. On the contrary, he finds religion to be not merely a factor in civilisation, but the very reason of its existence. Civilisation develops, he says, in order to give birth to a higher religion. In the language of learning and with characteristic frankness, he says that modern Western civilisation is non-Christian, or, as the historians would put it, "post-Christian," or "ex-Christian." In his view, the failure of religion in Europe gave Communism its chance.

There is no doubt that it was first the religious intolerance in Europe and then the lack of religion which expressed itself in organised force; in the loot of vast countries in the name of colonialism and in the denial of social justice to large areas of the earth's surface. As a result, some of the countries in Europe built palaces in which to parade their magnificence and set up gambling houses.

Marx, a Western man, according to Toynbee, produced a Christian heresy by taking up arms on behalf of social justice, a grievously neglected Christian truth, to offset the Christian failure to give it a proper place in the scheme of things.

Because of the way the godless West has managed the affairs of humanity, a conflict has arisen between materialistic Communism as represented by Russia and material prosperity as represented by the U.S.A.

After decades of labour ranging over every sphere of human life in history, this great historian has come to the conclusion that God's Law of Love as it influences both law and freedom, is a liberating truth. This truth, he says, "which had once proved potent to set free fast-fettered Hellenes and Babylonians might once again be taken to heart by the children of a post Christian World which had been vainly seeking to ban those dread psychic principalities and powers in the name of a Science that was as impotent to exorcize them as any pre-Christian magic."

If the post-Christian or ex-Christian West is to survive, it

must return to the Law of God or perish: a thing which to us in India is as clear as daylight.

Toynbee tells us what has been told us already by Sri Krishna: "*Na me bhakta pranashyati*"—Those who dedicate themselves to Me do not perish. The rest do. This is the message of Indian culture.

IV

All of us talk of Indian culture; few of us care to study or to understand what it really means, and many of those who do, fail to see it as a whole.

Our culture was born over two thousand years before Christ and it has flourished ever since, and does so still, in unbroken continuity. This fact provides the most important feature, not only of our history, but of that of the whole world. India has persisted as a cultural unit, in spite of the vicissitudes of the last thirty centuries.

What is Indian culture? The very question pre-supposes that it is different from that of other lands. It does not require much perspicacity to discover that it differs from the culture of Europe or from that of China in the East and of Iran in the West.

What is it, then, that distinguishes our culture from all others?

Let me pursue the enquiry a little further. What is culture? It is not the outward garb of life, though it is often taken to be such. In old days, imitation of the west was held to be the badge of modern culture, giving to those who adopted it—thanks to the foreign rule—a title to social superiority.

This popular conception of culture is wrong: the material equipment of life constitutes the civilisation of a country. Culture consists of certain fundamental values characterising its way of life.

As man's mastery over nature increases, civilisation changes. Culture persists through time, though each gene-

ration has to recapture its fundamental values in ways suited to its equipment and needs.

Sri Ramachandra travelled in canoes and wore the bark of trees; we put on fine-spun silk and travel in aeroplanes. But he would be a bold man indeed who would claim that he is more cultured than Sri Ramachandra!

Civilisation is the common heritage of mankind. It is borrowed by one country from the other. The fundamental values of a culture are rooted in the sub-conscious mind of a people; they can only be captured by every generation through the effort of imagination and the will.

What are the fundamental values of culture as contrasted with those that are non-fundamental? Fundamental values are those which have a perennial appeal so long as the culture lasts. Generation after generation finds self-fulfilment by living up to these values. And the culture persists only so long as the best men in each generation find such self-fulfilment.

These fundamental values of a culture are not unrelated. They arise from, and are vitalised by, a single Central Idea —an idea which is not a means to an end, but an end in itself, persisting through continuous times. So long as the Central Idea retains its vitality and so long as its fundamental values are reflected in the collective outlook of the people, so long and no longer will the culture live.

What happened to the Egyptian, the Greek and the Roman cultures? For various reasons—either overwhelming conquests or soil-erosion—the characteristic central ideas underlying these cultures lost their vitality. The best men in the land were prepared to imitate foreign cultures, or to live without a culture, rather than to find self-fulfilment in living up to the values of their own. In consequence, the cultures lost their vitality and so did those of the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans. Only the inhabitants of Egypt, Greece and Italy were left to live on without the vitalising inspiration of a Central Idea.

Let us now turn to India. For well-nigh three thousand

years, the values embodied in the *Bhagavad Gita* have persisted. In each generation the men with the greatest creative power have found self-fulfilment in living up to these values and finding in them joy and strength. Take for instance the last century. In spite of the devastating influence of the materialistic West, the great architects of the country, such as Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Tilak, Sri Aurobindo and Gandhiji—and after them millions of smaller people—found self-fulfilment by living up to those values. That is why, in spite of changing situations, tragic vicissitudes and a varying civilisation, India has never lost its vitality; these values have continued to have a meaning and purpose for us.

During the worst of our historic periods, India saw its renaissance in the shape of the Bhakti Movement rising in strength, the source of which was our fundamental values. Similarly, in the last 150 years we have seen the rise of the modern renaissance, the vigorous re-birth of a new philosophy of literature and of art; of great experiments in political organisation and the winning of freedom and of a spiritual effort to project our fundamental values on the screen of international life. All these have been the products of our culture.

What is this Central Idea, then, which has supported the vitality of our culture through the ages? What is its basic nature, shorn of all trappings?

This idea affirms as the aim and end of life the absolute integration of the human personality.

Without going into details, I may refer to the three main aspects of this idea.

First: Man is an inalienable centre of strength and dignity; the architect of his own fate, and who is gifted with the power to attain in this very life, self-realisation in full measure—*samadhi, nirvana, moksha* or *kaivalya,* or by whatever name it is called.

Secondly: Life sheltered and upheld by the Moral Order

working through the inelectable law, of which Truth and Non-violence are two of the aspects.

Lastly: The highest destiny of man is to acquire faith in the Absolute—call it God if you like—and willingness to be Its instrument in the fulfilment of its divine purpose.

This is the Central Idea, that man can rise to divine proportions by transcending his human limitations through surrender to the Absolute. The Indo-Aryans based on this the fundamental values of their culture and Indians were later on to rear their culture and maintain its vigorous freshness on that same basis.

The vital step in this all-inclusive integration of personality is, as stated by Sri Krishna, to see "All in Me and Me in all."

This is not a religious or philosophic conception. It is a force of tremendous creative power. Under its impact, Man is no more an insect, but has the potentiality of a god *to become God.* Inspired by this idea, the fundamental values of our culture have shaped and maintained, and even now are shaping, new social relations, intellectual advancement and aesthetic achievement.

Suppose a time should come—may God forbid—when the best men of India in a given generation should cease to accept the sanctity of human personality and its freedom to realise itself on the lines of the individual temperament.

Suppose they were to lose faith in the Moral Order and were to think it vain to live up to Truth, Non-violence, Non-stealing, Non-waste and Non-possession—*satya, ahimsa, brahmacharya* and *aparigrahya.*

Suppose they lost faith in God and believed themselves to be mighty insects:

India then might become a member of what Toynbee calls the "self-deconsecrated" Modern Western Society. But certainly it will cease to be India as we and the world know it; our culture would have been lost; the work of the great masters from Vyasa and Buddha, and Sri Aurobindo and Gandhiji would have been undone.

However, so long as the Idea maintains its vitality and so long as we try to live up to it, Indian Culture will live vigorously and help to uplift man.

LXIV

TEACHERS' ROLE—CREATIVE POWER —SPIRITUAL VALUES

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
December 19, 1954

DURING the last eight years, every sphere of life in India has been blossoming with fresh vitality. I wish I could say the same of all our universities. Some of them have been slow to catch up with the times.

Unfortunately, during the period of our struggle for freedom, most of them kept away from its creative urge; they have, therefore, yet to develop—and I hope they will do it soon—that atmosphere in which social, moral and spiritual awareness of the country is heightened.

But there is a stirring of new life. Among University men and academicians, there is a discontent which is the parent of progress. New experiments are being made everywhere. Every convocation address in recent years has been an attempt at adjusting our academic life to the needs of the times.

There are no differences as regards our objective. In its cultural aspect, the University has to impart knowledge; in its emotional aspect, it has to discover and to inculcate values and to manifest them and to introduce a sense of self-discipline into its activities. In its collective aspect it has to develop the will which shall release spiritual energy. But it must be confessed that we are very far from the objective.

In order to secure this end, the universities will have to be well-equipped and the teachers well-paid. Most of the older universities are struggling with want of funds; many of them lack up-to-date libraries and adequately furnished sports clubs and hostels. Yet new universities are being started in the country without adequate funds.

The Governments have yet to provide a comprehensive Plan by which the existing universities may be placed on the same level of efficiency as in modern advanced countries. No plans for material advancement will bear fruit unless they are fully modernised and the university teachers are not left frustrated for want of decent competences and necessary facilities.

The teacher's role—and particularly in the universities—should be creative. For him devotion to learning has to be both a means and an end. Without such an ideal his profession cannot be restored to that prestige which is his due; nor can he, like the *rishis* of old, have a sense of self-fulfilment.

By the very nature of his profession, a teacher is pledged to a simple life and noble aspirations. While society has to guarantee him decent competence—and it is a step long overdue; it is suicidal not to take it—it must not be forgotten that all great and enduring work is done with a sense of mission. The status of a teacher's profession will be just as high as the standard of professional conduct which he maintains.

The teacher is the principal driving force in a dynamic society, and his leadership is most essential to free India, which is being built up anew from the bottom upwards.

II

Free India is on the move. Our agriculture, our social life, our economic pattern, our moral and spiritual outlook, are all being transformed, and this will demand from each one of us, and particularly university teachers and students,

the strength of mind and breadth of vision which go to the release of creative power.

The aim of our universities must therefore be to provide the students with the most valuable asset in life—creative power. For, young men,—particularly those like you who are going out in life—will need this power at every step.

If in your university years, you have not acquired the technique of developing this creative power, you must seek to do it as early as possible. If you have it, you will succeed in life; if you have it not, you will fail.

If you ask me whether you will succeed in life or not, I will ask you a question in return: Have you developed that impatient readiness to find the truth by study, enquiry, self-discipline and service—the first step in creative power? If not, are you prepared to acquire it as speedily as possible?

If this readiness is quenched, you will cease to grow; decay of the spirit will set in; creative power will never be yours. And this applies not only to you, but to everyone of us, old and young.

If you want to develop this power, you will have to insist on being intellectually honest all the time. To keep one's mind open to truth is not an easy matter. It implies the capacity to approach a question from every aspect. It implies an ability in us to persist in the facing of facts; to review our opinion of men and things even at the cost of our cherished beliefs; to have the courage to sacrifice conceit, self-interest and prestige, whenever they come in the way of seeking of truth.

Creative power will never be developed or retained, if we accept ready-made beliefs. In most cases our beliefs are given to us by the members of our family, our friends, by priests or politicians, by newspaper articles or cheap slogans.

When the mind rests in such ready-made beliefs, it stops dead.

Most people cease to develop this power after they reach

the age of twenty-five. They never learn anything afterwards, for they have never been taught to keep their minds open, or their minds are too indolent to pursue a ceaseless quest.

Do not carry away the notion that it is only the orthodox in religion or the older in age whose minds are closed. Rarely can anyone who believes in Western materialism, look for a higher truth. Most persons who claim to possess a 'scientific outlook' have closed minds on the truths of the Spirit. Most men in totalitarian states, or those who accept totalitarian ideologies, have cast iron beliefs.

Even in democratic countries the engines of mass propaganda are so powerful that they destroy the power to think for ourselves and the courage to hold to our own ways of thought. Gandhiji restored to us our faith in truth. Unfortunately, many of us who claim to follow him fail to realise that to believe in what he said is not the same thing as to pursue the truth for ourselves as he wanted us to do.

Every day of our lives, therefore, we should make efforts at a progressive conquest over beliefs, prejudices and fears. Then only we can rise high, or review things in their appropriate relationships, and develop creative power.

III

The way to keep the mind open is to keep constant contact with great and noble minds, and to study and ponder over great events; we can only do this by formative studies; the study—may be elementary—of classics, history, philosophy and religion. This does not merely apply to us all. For, whatever our age, we can cease to be students only at the peril of being dead in life.

Such formative study will keep the mind on the alert and make it capable of reaching new convictions and testing old ones. It will form our character, direct our aspirations to right ends and shape our ideals. It will give us self-dis-

cipline and a sense of responsibility. It will develop our personalities by giving us those moral and spiritual values which enlarge and purify our vision. It will help us to develop an attitude of mind which is more inclusive in its power of experience and appreciation.

It is only too evident that those who are in charge of universities have not yet woken up to this patent need of human existence. Every day formative studies are relegated to the background.

One of the most marked defects of our system is that the products of our universities who possess character and vigour prefer the civil service, or the Bar or business to educational work. Education is left to the poor and unambitious, or to those who have no special bent, as an obvious and simple method of earning their livelihood. The blame must fall principally on the universities, which prescribe studies so aimlessly that they neither inspire interest nor train the mind.

A few essential subjects thoroughly taught would give greater scope for the development of creative power than a large number of subjects flabbily taught. While large concessions have to be made to utilitarian demands, the needs of formative education are imperative.

IV

You are all going out as young sons of India, the Motherland. The responsibility for carrying out her mission is therefore yours. You are citizens of a free and democratic country which is one of the biggest in population in the world. You are going to carry forward that spiritual heritage of which Gandhiji was the last, and one of the greatest, representatives.

As citizens of a free and democratic State, all of us have to shoulder the responsibility of citizenship. We have therefore to realise what a free democracy means. It is an interplay of free individual life where each seeks to lift the

nation to a greater height of achievement. The sanctity of human personality is its very essence.

We all pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi. We rightly describe him as the architect of modern India. But to be worthy of him we should study his life and teachings to develop—may be only somewhat—the deep and abiding faith in God which moved him to perform those miracles which placed India on the path of world leadership. We have also to understand the significance of the great Indian Renaissance which, for over a century, has been shaping our life to heroic and noble ends.

If, therefore, you are to be useful in your future walk of life, you must train yourselves to appreciate the beauty of life through poetry and philosophy; to gain an insight into the history and mission of India; and to study, in the original or through translation, Sanskrit literature, that perennial storehouse of moral and spiritual values. Thus only will you be able to realise the meaning and purpose of the prestige and influence which is enjoyed by India today in the affairs of nations.

One of such spiritual values is discipline. Issues are being so confused by the political atmosphere of the day that discipline is often supposed to be synonymous with tyranny or unkindness. In fact, discipline is another name for order and harmony; for self-control and character; that is, for happiness, well-being and a sense of responsibility.

The object of maintaining discipline is to protect young men against their own weaknesses or impulses and passions. Human nature in earlier years is not gifted with the power to control them; it has to be trained to do so; the way to self-discipline through well-regulated discipline, during the early periods of a student-life should be taught in all educational institutions.

In modern times, forces in human nature are being released with such vigour that they threaten not only the traditions of our culture but the stability of life itself. If, therefore, education in India has to be a success, we have

to set our feet once more on the path of discipline and self-mastery. Lack of discipline means slavery—to our weaknesses; self-discipline means freedom.

Solomon the Wise said: "The very true beginning of wisdom is the desire of discipline, and the care of discipline is love." And this love must come from the teachers and the desire to maintain discipline must also come from them. Young men go wrong only when the teachers fail to value discipline in their own life and in the life of their students.

Moral and spiritual values are the very essence of life. They should be inculcated in every educational system worth the name. Without them, human behaviour is rudderless. Without them, men can never decide what is false, what is ugly and what is beautiful. Without such power, you will never be able to solve the problems which you will have to face in the future.

Unfortunately, most of the universities are indifferent to the giving of a training in such values. They seem to think they can carry on without that active faith in God which inculcates them.

Without such faith, however, human beings cannot release the transforming energy; without it social studies are barren and social work has no soul.

With such faith, your path will be inspired by a spiritual energy which will provide the motive-power to a dedicated life. Then you will be a success and your work will be the real and lasting.

For developing such values, I cannot give you advice better than in terms—suitably modified—of the oldest Convocation Address in the world which finds a place in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. No better advice was ever given to mankind at any time in history.

Speak the truth: Walk in the way of thy duty:
Neglect not the study of higher knowledge:
Treat thy teachers with respect and gratitude:
And fail not in taking upon thyself the burden of life....
Neglect not truth, nor thy duty; nor social welfare;

Nor thy own good; nor the study and teaching of higher
Knowledge. Neglect not thy duties unto God, or unto the
Heritage which our forefathers have left behind them....
Let thy mother be as thy goddess; Let thy father
Be unto thee as thy God; And so thy teachers and thy
Guest. Treat men of high learning and character with
Respect; Give them what you can with faith and reverence.
In thy action, behave as do such men of high character and learning;
Even as they do, do thou likewise.
This is the teaching;
This is the exhortation;
This is the doctrine of high knowledge.

शिवस्ते पंथानस्सन्तु
MAY THY PATH BE BLEST

LXV

DURYODHANA'S FEEDING BOTTLE—THE RELICS OF HASTINAPUR—THE RISE AND DESTRUCTION

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
January 2, 1955.

SUPPOSE I were to tell you that I saw with my own eyes, the terracotta feeding bottle of Duryodhana; the painted grey pot from which Draupadi served food; the little arrow with which Arjuna learnt marksmanship; the little stick with which Subhadra applied collyrium to her eyes, and the cutter with which Bhishma pared his ancient nails, you would laugh, wouldn't you? You would bet that I was joking, or worse, that I was losing my senses. Well, you have lost the bet. I have seen these things or at any rate things that they would have so used. Now listen.

On Wednesday the 17th of November I went to Hastinapur, a new township, twenty-five miles from Meerut. It has been recently built for refugees on the banks of the old bed of the Ganga which is called "Buddhi Ganga." At present the Ganga flows at a distance of five miles from the town.

The town, though spick and span, is not popular with the inhabitants, for it has no industry to keep them from want. The Forest Department, however, has made a good job of the ravines. Avenues are planted on both sides of the roads; those on the right are called after the Pandavas and those on the left after the Kauravas. Who can say that our Forest Department is not impartial?

The main attraction for me was the old site of Hastinapur, where, centuries ago, the drama of the *Mahabharata* was enacted. For some years now the Archaeological Department has been at the mound which covers the site. I saw the excavations, inspected the finds, discussed matters with the enthusiastic Shri B. B. Lal of the Department, who is in charge, and adjusted them with what little I knew of the literary evidence of the period. On coming to Delhi, I had long discussions with Shri Chhabra and Shri Lal and consulted Dr. D. N. Wadia, our eminent geologist.

Imagine my standing on the spot to which Shantanu brought Matsyagandhi; where Bhisma took the great vow; where Dhritarashtra and Pandu were born; where Vyasa came and taught; where Duryodhana invited disaster; where the fateful game of dice was played and Draupadi was disrobed; where the Lord sought peace and His advice was spurned; where the citizens welcomed Yudhishthira after the great Battle; where, perhaps, Janamejaya returned in triumph after performing the serpent sacrifice at Taxila, from where, as the devastating floods and hailstorms came, his great-great grandson Nichakshu led the Kurus to Kaushambi.

I was standing on the very spot. I was bursting with excitement.

II

The Hastinapur of the Kurus lies buried about forty feet deep and a part of it has been opened up by a shaft. Here, for the first time, is laid bare the material evidence of the Hastinapur of the Kurus.

Several settlements are super-imposed on the natural soil, one on the top of the other, with several intervening periods of desertion. The uppermost and last was of the Khilji period in the early 14th century, the lowest and first went back to about the 14th century before Christ.

One of these settlements was the Hastinapur of the Kurus.

You should know all about digging the graves of a vanished civilization. Each age has its distinctive pottery, building materials, seals and weapons. By correlating these finds you can, within a margin of error of a century or so, find the period of each settlement. If the site has been continuously occupied, the finds of an earlier age gradually mingle with those of the later. If, on the other hand, there is a desertion, there is no overlapping of distinctive finds of different periods; there is a complete break in the culture.

III

At present the date of the war is variously placed by the scholars as having been waged in B.C. 1200; B.C.1400; B.C. 1800; B.C. 2200 and even B.C. 3000.

But here was no disconnected literary evidence, no inference from vague astronomical data, but material evidence which would be tested by geology, chemistry and physics. Its inferential impact was startling. The unmeasured darkness between the dawn of Indian history, which began with the birth of Lord Buddha and Udayana, king of Kaushambi, and Bimbisara of Magadha placed in the sixth century and the death of Janamejaya, the grandson of Arjuna, was now bridged.

Just above the natural soil was the first occupation of

the site by the pretero-historic pre-Aryans of the Gangetic Valley, who used ochre-coloured pottery. This was the race to which Jarasandha and Kamsa of the Epic period probably belonged. It lasted for two hundred years, roughly from B.C. 1400 to 1200.

These people of the Ochre-Coloured Ware were one of the basic races which went to form the Indian people. From the banks of the Ganga they gradually moved in a south-westerly direction, till they reached the Narmada Valley. About the same time, the people of the Harappa culture were moving from the valley of the Indus in a south-easterly direction across Rajasthan, Saurashtra and Gujarat to the valley of the Godavari. South of the Godavari was a different race using polished stone axes unknown to north India.

After the first occupation, which lasted till about B.C. 1200, the site was deserted for about fifty years.

On the deserted site is imposed the layer of earth continuing whatever is left of the second occupation, the Hastinapur of the Kurus.

This occupation began about B.C. 1150. It ended when the Ganga rose and washed away the site. The flood carried away the materials and deposited some of them in the hollow of the ravines and further down in the bed of the old Ganga. They were found there fifty feet below the present level of the bed.

This confirms the literary evidence. The Hastinapur of the Kurus was washed away by floods and invaded by hail-storms in the reign of Nichakshu, the great-great grandson of Janamejaya, Arjuna's grandson. The Kurus then migrated to Kaushambi, three hundred miles away.

The deposits of this occupation, about seven to eight feet high, indicate a life of over three hundred years, ending in about B.C. 800. From Hastin, the reputed founder of Hastinapur, to Nichakshu, there are twenty-three generations. Allowing fifteen years for a generation, this period would seem to be fairly reasonable.

This second occupation of the site by the Kurus has special characteristics, different from the first occupation of the Ochre-Coloured people below and from the third occupation above the flood desertion. The third one is unmistakably of the Magadhan period placed from B.C. 575 to 250. The burnt brick, iron instruments and the well-known Northern Black Polished pottery which survive in the layer of this occupation, are found during the period throughout the Gangetic Valley from Ahichhatra to Patna and Vaishali.

On the other hand, the residents of the Hastinapur of the Kurus did not know the use of burnt bricks, nor of iron. They used the Painted Grey pottery, unconnected with either the ware of the first occupation or of that of the third. Besides the Painted Grey Ware, I saw fragments of bangles of glass and lac, a terracotta feeding bottle and a copper head of a small arrow and a nail-cutter to which I referred in the opening paragraph of this letter.

At last I was in the presence of something which had been used by the people whose heroic deeds have been enshrined in the *Mahabharata*.

IV

The people of the Painted Grey Ware were different from the other peoples of the Ochre-Coloured Wares, of the Harappa culture and of the Polished Axe-Culture who lived in the country. They appear to have occupied the territory from Sistan to Afghanistan. Passing through the Bolan Pass they had moved to the Punjab. There they settled largely in the Sutlej Valley and had a settlement at Rupar. They also moved on the banks of the Sarasvati flowing in the desert, the bed of which is now called the Ghagar and extends upto Pakistan.

They lived in the settlements in the region of the Kurukshetra and, migrating southwards, they settled in Hastinapur. They moved further south to Indraprastha, where the junior branch of Janamejaya ruled. The painted

Grey Ware has been found in the Purana Kila of Delhi, the old site of Indraprastha. Then they settled in Ahichhatra and moved up to Mathura. Their eastern outpost known so far was Pariar in Unnao, a few miles away from Lucknow.

Later on, the migrating Painted Grey Ware people lost their distinctiveness. Mixing freely with other races, they moved along the valleys of the Ganga and the Yamuna and southwards through the valleys of the Chambal, to the Narmada Valley.

The evidence clearly establishes that the people of the Grey Ware were the Vedic Aryans; the Kurus, which included the Bharatas, forming their most powerful section. So we now have material evidence of their migrations.

V

The material evidence now available at Hastinapur can, with very little difficulty, be equated with other evidence which comes from references and synchronisms in the *Rigveda Samhita* and from references to individuals and events in the *Mahabharata* and the Puranas. In this way it is possible to reconstruct the historical sequences of events in the life of Hastinapur with an error of about half-a-century either way.

The Vedic Aryans, that is, the people of the Painted Grey Ware, are found settled in Sistan, Afghanistan and both the Punjabs, particularly on the banks of the Sutlej and the Saraswati; their settlements may be found even in the Indus Valley. This was a century or two after the later Harappa culture had disappeared from the Punjab.

Hastinapur was an important centre of Aryan occupation. Hastin belonged to the Vedic Purus, the most important tribe to take part in the Dasharajna, or the Battle of Ten Kings, referred to in the *Samhita.* This battle was a definite event of great historical significance. In a way; it was a civil war, for the Purus led many Aryan and non-Aryan tribes as confederates, while their opponents, the Bharatas,

formed the larger group of Aryans of which the Puru tribe itself was an integral part. Possibly, the Vedic Age came to a close as a result of the continued wars which followed the Battle and that are represented by the campaigns of Parashurama.

Parashurama's father Jamadagni, Visvamitra, Vasistha and perhaps his grandson Parashara, the father of Vyasa, were all contemporaries and were alive at the time of the Battle.

During this period, the Kurus had not emerged as a separate clan from the fluctuating combinations of the different clans which formed the Bharatas; but a prince by the name of Kurusravana, who flourished at the same periods as the Battle, is referred to in the *Samhita*. Soon after the Battle, it appears that the Purus, the Tritsus and several other sub-tribes, combined to form the Kuru-Panchala people.

The only link that identifies this with the Hastinapur of the Kurus is the name of Kurusravana. It is possible that the words Kuru and Sravana were separated by tradition and that he may perhaps have been, in accordance with Puranic genealogy, the same as Kuru, the son of Samvarana. If so, he was three or four generations removed from Hastin as well as from Purukutsa.

The Battle of the Ten Kings can therefore be safely placed in B.C. 1050. This would also be the period when, on linguistic grounds, philologists consider the *Rigveda Samhita* to have been composed. This date would also be consistent with the facts that Vyasa was the son of the Parashara referred to in the *Samhita* and that Bhishma, Drona and Karna of the Epic War were reputed to be the pupils of Parashurama, the son of the Vedic sage Jamadagni. Sages and teachers live very much longer than kings. Taking this into account, Vyasa's birth can be placed about B.C. 950.

He lived to a very hoary age—possibly more than 120 years. Most of what may be called the authentic tradition preserved in the *Mahabharata* took place in his lifetime. At the time of the Bharata War, Vyasa was about the same

age as Bhishma, or perhaps a little older, and would have been not less than eighty. The Battle of Kurukshetra can, therefore, be placed at about B.C. 870.

Ugrasravas had heard Vaishampayan reciting the original *Mahabharata* during the sacrificial session at Takshilla held by Janamejaya, the grandson of Arjuna, when Vyasa himself was present. The death of Janamejaya and Vyasa may be placed at B.C. 830.

Ugrasravas also recited the *Mahabharata* at the Twelve-Year Sacrifice performed by Kulapati Shaunak in Naimisharanya in the Sitapur district. Other Puranas were also recited at the same sacrifice, at the time when Adhisima Krishna, the third descendant from Janamejaya Parikshit, was reigning in Hastinapur. The recitals of the *Mahabharata* at Janamejaya's sacrifice and at Shaunak's sacrifice took place during Ugrasravas' life; the reign of Adhisima Krishna can therefore be placed within thirty years of the first recital, that is to say, about B.C. 810.

At the time when the flood overtook Hastinapur and the Kurus had to leave the city, its ruler was Nichakshu, the son of Adhisima Krishna. On account of the destruction of Hastinapur the king led the Kurus further eastwards to settle in Kaushambi. The flood can therefore be dated as having taken place in about B.C. 800.

The deposits of the flood now exposed to view and the desertion which followed, show that the city was unoccupied for a period of from one to two hundred years.

The third occupation of the site began in about the middle of the sixth century. This synchronises with the age of the Magadhan culture with the Northern Black Polished Ware and with the beginning of Indian history, as it is called, after the birth of Buddha and Udayana, the famous king of Kaushambi, and the reign of Bimbisara of Magadha.

Buddha's death is generally placed in B.C. 487 or 483. Udayana is stated to have been born on the same day as the Lord, whom he survived, according to the Petavatthu

commentary. B.C. 540 to 480 would, therefore, be reasonable dates, in which case it would be removed by 250 years from the flight of Nichakshu from Hastinapur. The Puranas mention eighteen rulers between the two kings.

If these inferences are correct, we have now before us sufficient evidence to justify the conclusion that from the Battle of the Ten Kings to Udayana and Bimbisara, the founder of the Magadhan Empire, we have continuous, though meagre, history.

On the 17th of December we visited Rupar on the Sutlej, about thirty miles from Chandigarh, to see the excavations which have brought to light a sequence of cultures from B.C. 2000 to the present times. The first settlement on the natural soil, which is forty to sixty feet below the top of the mound, begins about B.C. 2000 when the Harappa culture had reached maturity. This settlement continued for about six hundred years; its upper layer discloses the final stage of the Harappa culture which disappeared about B.C. 1400 or 1500.

After about three to four hundred years of desertion, we find the settlement of the Painted Grey Ware people, the Vedic Aryans. The date of the settlement could be assessed at about B.C. 1150, the same time as the foundation of Hastinapur. The settlement was deserted after about three hundred years or a little longer, about the same time as the desertion of Hastinapur. After this desertion of about two hundred years, we find a settlement of the Magadhan period—B.C. 600 to about A.D. 200. Layer by layer, therefore, the Rupar settlements, except the first in time, correspond to those of the Hastinapur. The finds clearly show that the Painted Grey Ware culture was neither simultaneous with the Harappa culture, nor was it continuous with it, and it certainly began on the site three to four hundred years after about 1500 when the decadant Harappa culture had disappeared. The Vedic Aryans, therefore settled in *Saptasindhu* on the banks of Sapta Sindhu a few centuries after the Harappa culture had disappeared.

At the same time, Rupar corroborates Hastinapur that the Vedic Aryans of the Painted Grey Ware settled on the banks of the Sutlej as well as the banks of the Ganga about B.C. 1150.

How the two settlements came to be deserted about the same time,—one by floods and the other without it,—remains a mystery.

Was it that the Saraswati and the Drishadvati having been dried up, there was a general exodus to the more hospitable banks of the Ganga and the Yamuna?

Rupar, like Hastinapur, also shows that the events known to us through the Vedas and the *Mahabharata* have to be accommodated within three centuries and a half.

LXVI

MEMORIES OF A FOREST UNIVERSITY— THE FIRST OF PROPHETS

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
January 16, 1955.

ON SEPTEMBER 26, 1954, we went to celebrate *Vana Mahotsava* at Naimisharanya (corrupted into *Nimsaran*) in the Sitapur district. This is a thickly-wooded little forest in the catchment area of the Gomati. Its majestic trees and its various ruins and temples, dating from different centuries, combine to give it an oldworld flavour.

Chakratirtha, which is perhaps the *Ekachakratirtha,* to which Vyasa sent Yudhishthira, is still a place of pilgrimage. It is a circular tank supplied by three fresh water springs.

On *amavasya,* the dark night of the month *Aswin* (*Bhadrapad* in Western India) sacred to the *pitris,* the manes, we visited Naimisharanya. About thirty thousand people had come to bathe in the holy *Chakratirtha.* I was

told that if it had fallen on a Monday, lacs of people would have been there.

We duly celebrated the *Vana Mahotsava* and planted trees with ceremony. We also had *darshan* at one of the temples and paid a visit to the *ashram* of Swami Naradananda. During his nineteen years' stay there, this solitary sannyasi has built up a hundred-acre colony, with a *pathshala,* a prayer-hall and houses for those who are in search of spiritual power.

We also visited the spot where, according to tradition, Vyasa composed the *Mahabharata.*

II

While we were driving towards Naimisharanya, I felt sure that I had been present there when the great event happened. It still stands out vividly before my eyes.

There was Kulapati Shaunak, the venerable head of the Forest University of Naimisharanya, with the sacrificial fires, kept alive for twelve years, burning brightly before him. The *rishis* had gathered there anxious to hear the recital by Ugrasrávas the son of Lomaharshana of the great Epic which he had heard from Vaishampayana.

Ugrasravas bowed low to everyone with folded hands, and began to recite in a clear voice:

"Unto Narayana I bow, and to Nara; also to Saraswati. Now shall 'Jaya' (Victory) be recited."

III

According to certain scholars, the Master lived 3800 years ago. But recent excavations at Hastinapur show that he was born after the Vedic age had come to an end about B.C. 950.

The rolling Saraswati, on the banks of which the *rishis* had composed and chanted the Vedic *mantras,* had already dried up. Its waters now flowed westward and the current had come to be called Yamuna. The holy river only lived

in the memory of men as the goddess of learning. For centuries now the Aryan and non-Aryan blood had been freely mixed. Indian Culture, the result of Aryo-Dravidian impact, was at its post-natal vigour.

In the hey-day of Vedic life, the Vasisthas—the Pure—were a great family of Vedic *rishis,* whose sacred chants survive today in a section of the *Rigveda.* The most outstanding of the Vasisthas was revered as one of the fathers of the race. It was he who had led the armies of the Aryan King Sudas against ten Aryan and non-Aryan kings headed by Vishvamitra, and who finally vanquished them in the Battle of the Ten Kings, *Dasharajna.*

Sahasrarjuna had come from the half-explored banks of the Narmada, had spread terror in *Saptasindhu,* the Vedic Punjab; devastated the Aryan settlements and the sacred *ashrams* and brought the Vedic Age to a close. Parashurama, the great Bhrigu, had risen, however, in irresistible might, destroyed the wicked kings and saved Aryan society. The memory of his mighty exploits was still an unfailing source of strength.

Aryan conquerors had now founded fresh kingdoms on the banks of the Ganga and the Yamuna, the most notable of which was ruled by the Bharatas from Hastinapur and this was both the sword and the shield of *Arya-Dharma.*

One day, as the sage Parashara, the grandson of the great Vasistha, was crossing the Yamuna in a boat, he took a fancy to the fisherman's lovely daughter who was ferrying him across. To this girl, Satyavati, was born a son, dark-hued like the mother. He was named Krishna. Born on an island in the Yamuna near modern Kalpi in the Hamirpur district in U.P. he was also called *Dvaipayana.*

When Krishna had grown up he left his mother. It is likely that he joined his father and was brought up in the later tradition of the Vasisthas. The boy had the Vasistha heritage: a massive intellect and unfailing insight, a mastery of words and a passion for self-perfection. He took to the

ascetic life. He had, however, an only son, Shuka, the offspring of a momentary lapse.

The Vedic gods had surrendered their pre-eminence to the non-Aryan God Shiva, called *Ishana,* the Great Lord. Krishna turned to Him when he needed strength. But Narayana Rishi, identified with the Vedic Vishnu, was his favourite deity, for that sage of Badrinath was for him *Vasudeva,* God come to earth.

Krishna Dvaipayana collected the surviving Vedic *mantras;* redacted them and gave them a standard form and accent, which they still retain. Thus he gave us the source and symbol of India's eternal culture, our Rock of Ages. Because of this achievement a grateful generation named him *Vedavyasa,* Vyasa for short, a name revered in India for three milleniums as no other has been.

The simple Vedic sacrifices had now been replaced by elaborate sacrificial rituals, which lasted for years. Vyasa became an adept in sacrificial lore, and performed an elaborate sacrifice himself. It is possible that he had helped in its standardization, for, a few decades after his death, we find it collected in the *Brahmanas.*

Vyasa founded and presided over a vast forest university. It may have been at Prithudak, which is modern Pehava in the Karnal district, or at Naimisharanya itself, or anywhere in the region of Kurukshetra, which came to be known as *Brahmarshidesha,* the sacred land of the sages. His brilliant son, Shuka, the born ascetic, and his four disciples, Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila and Vaishampayana, themselves great *rishis,* ably assisted him in building up a great tradition of learning. As we know, Vaishampayana's pupil, Yajnavalkya, composed the *white Yajurveda.*

From time to time Vyasa visited other sacred places in *Brahmavarta;* everyone was a home of learning. As he visited them, he taught, inspired, uplifted, gathered wider knowledge himself and developed his spiritual horizon. He perhaps founded the *tirtha* cult, investing the lakes into

THE MADURA TAMIL SANGAM

which the disappearing Saraswati had split with special sanctity.

IV

Vyasa's mother, Satyavati, the charming fisher-girl, became the wife of Shantanu, the king of Hastinapur. But a few years after the king died, she was faced with disaster. Her son Vichitravirya could not, and her step-son, Bhishma,—true to his pledge not to marry—would not, save the royal house from extinction. At last, in great distress, Satyavati called upon her ascetic son, Vyasa, to continue the family line according to ancient custom. Vyasa obeyed.

Every participant was far from happy, but the demands of duty were inexorable. To one of his step-brothers' wives was born the blind Dhritrashtra; to another Pandu; to a maid-servant, who in ecstatic devotion offered herself to the sage, was born Vidura the wise.

Vyasa was not content with keeping the family intact, but devoted himself to the preservation of traditional continuity of the race. He rescued the dynastic exploits of the ancient Aryan kings from oblivion and laid the foundations of *Itihasa* and *Purana*—history and tradition. He was perhaps the first historian of the human race.

The vision of Vyasa gradually encompassed life in one vast concept of *Dharma* in all its bearings; in the strength and weakness of man; in the nature of human relationship; in the imponderable forces working in the universe; in the universal Moral Order supported by *satya*, *tapas* and *shanti*, truth, self-discipline and the all-embracing calm of the spirit.

Appearances dissolved before his penetrating gaze, and he realised *Brahma*, Reality, above and beyond what is and what is not: *sat-asatparam*. He saw the limitations which bind mankind to its unhappy destiny: fear, wrath and attachment; and as he saw this, men and things, for him, were filled with a new meaning, as manifestations of God.

The Master then founded a powerful cult of ascetic

followers, devoted to stern self-dicipline and pledged to the uplift of man. This cult was to be reorganised more than two thousand years later by Shankaracharya, who himself, in boyhood was initiated into an order of ascetics initiated by Vyasa—or perhaps his son Shuka. Uncontrolled by a pontiff and denied the benefit of an endowed church, this body of Sannyasis, has, nevertheless, through the influence of a dedicated life and an unbroken tradition of spiritual pastorship, exercised a potent influence towards redemption ever since.

Hastinapur enjoyed the hegemony of the Aryan dominions. Its elder statesmen had faith in *Dharma* which it was their glory, to translate into terms of life. The Master interested himself in its affairs, for he did not want Bharata to be without a social and political order.

With his blessings the wife of the blind Dhritrashtra bore a hundred sons, the Kauravas. To Pandu were born five Pandavas. When his grandsons grew up, Vyasa foresaw a catastrophe; he, therefore, advised his mother to retire to a forest.

The Kauravas were proud, insolent and grasping, while the Pandavas, though wise, valiant and fit to rule, were under the bar sinister. The conflict of their characters, temperament and ambitions, foreshadowed the fratricidal conflict, a disaster which would render his mission to associate *Dharma* with the land of the Bharatas futile.

Vyasa took the old hero, Bhishma, into his confidence and, on occasions, advised Dhritrashtra and Vidura, but his efforts came to nought. The Kauravas, led by the eldest, Duryodhana, were irrepressible and neither the strength nor wisdom of Bhishma and the other elder statesmen could persuade or overrule them. All they could do, in silent anguish, was to hold the power of Hastinapur together.

As things were, the Master saw what others could not: *Dharma* was bound up with the triumph of the Pandavas. He, therefore, helped them on every occasion by warnings,

advice and guidance. He also sought an ally in the Yadava chief, Sri Krishna, who was an adept in arms and possessed uncanny diplomacy, a flaming personality and unbounded vision. Above all, he possessed a burning zeal to safeguard *Dharma* and to destroy *adharma*. Even while still a youth, he had killed his uncle the wicked non-Aryan Kamsa, and boldly led his loyal clansmen to distant Dwaraka.

The two Krishnas, Dvaipayana and Vasudeva, soon developed a sense of partnership. They forged a new link of power by promoting the marriage of the Pandavas with the daughter of the mighty king, Draupad.

In Sri Krishna's friendship for Arjuna, the third son of Pandu—which, in a way, was promoted by him—the Master saw the inseverable strength of Nara and Narayana. At the *Rajasuya* sacrifice performed by the eldest Pandava, Yudhishthira, the embodiment of righteousness, the two Krishnas joined hands to establish him in an imperial position. Each acknowledged the greatness of the other. Vyasa, as the presiding Acharya, saw Sri Krishna honoured as the foremost among men.

The Master once said: "Wherever there is Sri Krishna, there is *Dharma*." Sri Krishna, while disclosing his Godhood to Arjuna, singled out the Master from all his contemporaries: "Among the sages, Vyasa is Me."

The Pandavas lost the throw of the dice. Before the assembled kings their proud consort, Draupadi, was subjected by the Kauravas to the grossest insult possible, and they were forced to go into the wilderness.

The thirteen years of stipulated banishment were over and yet the Kauravas were adamant: nothing, not even five villages would they give to the Pandavas. Sri Krishna made a final attempt to bring peace, but He did not prevail. The seer had no illusions about the future. He warned everyone of the grim consequences which would follow the war.

Then followed the eighteen days' Battle of Kurukshetra

in which most of the prominent rulers of India north of the Tungabhadra took part. Every participant felt the fate of the land of *dharma* to be in the balance, and it was in this grim struggle that for the first time they willed the all-Indian consciousness into existence. Ultimately, the Kauravas lost their lives and Yudhishthira, the eldest Pandava, assumed the imperial sceptre. *Dharma* had triumphed.

After many years of wise rule, the Pandavas, with Draupadi, placed Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna, on the throne and went to Heaven by way of Satopantha, a snow-peak near Badrinath.

As he lived on, the Master decided to leave for mankind the wisdom he had won. Then, to him, "Memory disclosed her face divine". Before his ancient eyes events were unfolded once again as they had happened from his own birth to the death of his grandson Parikshit; and in words simple, yet true, he composed the saga of the Bharatas, the most universal story of the human race, the *Mahabharata,* and "lit the lamp of knowledge."

As he composed the Epic, the Master described how, in his time, different streams of life had mingled; how the wicked had fought and lost; how the righteous had struggled and won. As the theme grew upon him, he saw the role and mission of Sri Krishna as God incarnate and gave us a living portrait of Him. In the section called *Bhagavad-gita,* he also conveyed His message; he also left us in vivid, matchless phrases, the Apocalypse in which Arjuna, with wondering awe, beheld in Sri Krishna the Omnipotent and heard His mandate. Thus, the Master made Him live in immortal words, so that He might live in our hearts for ever.

The *Mahabharata,* as the Master wrote it, was elaborated by his pupil, Vaishampayana, who recited it at the snake-sacrifice of King Janamejaya in the presence of the author himself.

In spite of his learning, detachment and self-discipline, Vyasa was intensely human. His son, the great Shuka, the

heir to all his gifts and achievements, was present at the snake-sacrifice, but he died soon after; for a moment, the Master broke down. He was burdened with age.

Sri Krishna was dead, and so was Parikshita, the grandson of his own grandson. His mission in life had been completed. Whatever he had done and wherever he was, was enshrined in immortal words. Naturally, therefore, he contemplated ending his life, but Lord Shiva would not allow him to do so. He blessed him with the strength to bear his sad bereavement with fortitude.

Vyasasthali, the spot where he was thus bidden to live, is a few miles from Kurukshetra.

Not for him was the weakness of suicide.

V

Truly has it been said: "What is not in it is not found elsewhere." Centuries have gone by; empires have risen and fallen; the outlook of man has changed in many respects; but the *Mahabharata* stands changeless as human nature, reflecting the universal experience of man.

The *Puranas* rightly call Vyasa the Manu of this Age. He is India's real architect and guide—not of the stretch of land measured by geographers and assessed by economists, but of the real, living and breathing India, the *Bharata* which has survived through the ages and that will live to lead mankind into the light in the time to come.

India would not have been what it has been and will be, but for the Master.

VI

The Master has never been for me a figment of the imagination. I have known him since my childhood, when, night after night, my mother told me the story of the *Mahabharata*. I saw him standing before me while I was writing some of my plays and dramas, particularly *Bhagavan Kautilya*. Once, when I had that feeling, I wrote a description of what I had seen.

All these thoughts crowded in on me when I visited the

spot in Naimisharanya, where, according to tradition, the Master composed the *Mahabharata*.

I felt triple joy in 1952, when I paid my worshipful tribute to him at Kalpi as I laid the foundation-stone of a memorial in his honour. Now I was standing in front of the very spot on which he had composed the *Mahabharata*. An ancient banyan tree of manifold trunks stood close at hand. I was deeply moved. I took the dust on which the Master's feet had once trodden and put it on my head in all humility.

As I did so, I muttered the wellknown prayer:

"To Him who is Brahma but without four faces;
To Him who is Vishnu but with two hands;
To Him who is Shankara, but without the third eye;
To Vyasa in the form of God;
To God in the form of Vyasa;
To Vasistha's heir, who stood self-realized in *Brahma;*
To Him I humbly bow."

LXVII

THE NEHRU YEAR—THE PANCHASHILA—ITS POSITIVE CONTENT

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
January 26, 1955.

ONE thing is certain. The year 1954 has been, to use yet again a much abused word, an 'historic' one. It is "Nehru Year." Panditji being India's man of destiny, it is India's year; a year in which India has influenced world trends more than at any other time and more than any other country.

Of course, this claim would be disputed by every non-Indian, and this only goes to show that the human race,

even when it tends to be totalitarian, has democratic instincts, for, if a democracy is anything, it always gives rise to conflicting opinions on any question.

To go back to last year It was a year of the Korean Peace and the return of the war prisoners, of the Colombo and the Geneva Conferences, of the Indo-China settlement, of a new chapter of cooing communism, of new combinations and alliances between nations of Europe and Asia, of the growing awareness among neutral nations, of a movement towards South East Asian Unity, above all, of the beginning of a strange new era when this restless globe is no longer experiencing the excitement of a shooting war.

In all these happenings Panditji has been the central figure—whether as a participant, guide, negotiator or one whose steps are being watched, is immaterial The supreme value for which India has stood in History—Peace *(Shantih, Shantih, Shantih)*—has found in him a fitting exponent As a result, a world of conflicts has been transformed into a world of lessening tensions

The fact that the Secretary-General of UNO travelled to Peking to shake hands with the Prime Minister of that country, against which the doors of UNO have been kept barred, is an instance in point It is a good augury for the future. Perhaps the Macarthies of the world, like Mark Anthony, may declaim "What a fall was there, my countrymen!"

The world is divided into two clearly defined, well-armed blocs. A few neutral, peace-loving nations cannot integrate these two groups. The dream of a world police force of free nations is shattered. So is the dream of a world revolution expected to follow in the wake of an all-round spontaneous combustion in capitalist countries. Nationalism has been expressing itself in anti-colonialism from Tunisia to Indonesia. India has proved that in spite of the uncertainties of the situation, it is possible to walk the non-alignment line and so create a bridge on which the hostile blocs can meet.

The old-world Balance of Power is gone—and gone for good. Regional pacts and regional communities have come into existence. The UNO is rendered ineffective, if not, impotent, in its mission to bring about world unity.

Two world patterns—one democratic and the other totalitarian—face each other in full panoplied strength. But there is so much of war preparedness that no war is possible. Each bloc has to suffer the other and go on piling up armaments in peace. a perfect Gilbertain situation To this situation the South East Asia has made an important contribution—the *Panchashila* It is the contribution of the genius of India to a difficult world situation. Through it alone can co-existence be transformed into harmony.

II

In many spheres of life we see and permit a blatant materialism to encourage lower instincts, harnessing the loyalty of the ignorant, invoking in them a desire for sectional gains. As a result, we see the world riven by bitterness: nation set up against nation; labour against capital; party against party, class against class, caste against caste; one group against another; each fighting for material benefit to the exclusion of the other. We find a situation in which grievances are not cured; they are only exploited—circumstances in which there are tensions but no harmony.

Uncontrolled by spiritual values, man seeks the triumph of materialism by creating dissatisfaction and undermining stability; by trying to dominate others and enslaving them, by destroying first, freedom in life, and, finally, the freedom of the Spirit.

Unconsciously driven by these attempts people take to a mode of thinking which prefers imposed strength to free co-operation. They welcome regimentation to maintaining the individuality of man, so that his divine essence is completely forgotten.

We have to guard ourselves against two classes of men,

who consciously or unconsciously are ranged against all that spiritual values stand for.

The first class consists of unbaked experts in physical and social sciences, not Einsteins and Du Nuys, not Ramans and Krishnans who are humble and high aspiring in their search of truth; but those who speak in their name but without their humility, and who are convinced that the narrow limit of their ignorance is the farthest boundary of knowledge.

The second group—that of totalitarians—is far more dangerous. These are frightened by man's loyalty to spiritual values, and at his urge towards higher aspirations. They see in them a menace to their cherished aim of establishing complete control over the thoughts and lives of men through the octopus of an all-powerful State so that man, losing his divine essence, should become completely insectified.

III

Under these conditions *Panchashila* can be no more than an empty formula, if co-existence is supported by mutual fear of world destruction or a mutual hope that given time the other side would collapse. Its strength can only be drawn from a powerful world conscience which permits of no external aggression and no internal subversion.

How to bring about this spiritual awakening of the world is not a political problem. It is a problem of giving a spiritual content to a political formula. To adapt a Gandhian phrase: *Panchashila* to be effective must generate the power to overcome ill-will, distrust and violence through a spiritual faith in Non-violence. It must be by bringing into operation the principles laid down by the *Bhagavadgita*: 'Harming none, by no one be harmed'.

Can this spiritual awareness be imparted to power politics in an age of 'scientific' neglect of spiritual things and a world-wide campaign for insectifying man through godless materialism? The year 1955 will perhaps give the answer.

Without such a spiritual awakening, however, there is no guide for human behaviour. Without it man can never decide what is false or true, what is ugly or beautiful. Without it man will never be able to solve the tremendous problems of the Hydrogen Age.

Constantly we talk of Gandhiji and Gandhism, but we think of Gandhiji *minus* his spiritual outlook and his faith in Truth and Non-violence and in God We want to admire *Hamlet* from which the Prince of Denmark is eliminated If we disregard all that Gandhiji stood for, we lose sight of the total harmony of all things that are noble, gentle and high-aspiring

Panchashila will succeed and war avoided only when we put into practise true Gandhism and learn to rely upon the inner springs of inspiration which made Gandhiji what he was.

India's faith, however, in moral and spiritual values is unshakable. A challenge to the *Panchashila* is a challenge to the mission of India and all that we stand for.

LXVIII

MUHARRAM–LUMBINI FOREST–GORAKHNATH –DEVA SHARIF

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
February 13, 1955.

It is September 8, the day of the Muharram.

Muharram is no longer as great an event on our side as it is in Lucknow. As you probably know, on this day, centuries ago, Imam Husain, the noble grandson of the Prophet of Islam, was slain at Kerbala For nine days he fought his persecutors with dauntless courage, but on the tenth he fell along with seventy-two of his followers.

Year after year the Kerbala tragedy is kept fresh in the minds of Muslims all over the world. But Lucknow, as you know, was ruled over by the Nawab Vazirs of Oudh, who were *Shias,* which means that they claimed the great martyr as their Imam.

During the Muharram, the three *Imambaras*, the prayer houses, constructed by one or other of the Nawab Vazirs in Lucknow, are splendidly lit up for several nights to commemorate the martyr. *Tajias* or effigies of his tomb, replicas of his horse Dhuldhul and of his standards called *alams* are displayed with scrupulous zeal.

But that is not all. The *Tajia* with Dhuldhul and the *alams* are also carried in the streets, accompanied by crowds of mourners who recite the story of the Imam's martyrdom. The mourners, who are probably professional, beat their breasts. Some walk on fire; others lash themselves with chains, or stab themselves with knives. Women, overpowered by memories which have long been sanctified by religious tradition, cry hysterically.

In this way and although the event took place in a far-off land many centuries ago, the poignant memory of the Imam's martyrdom evokes collective emotion generation after generation. Who shall say that a beautiful event can ever be forgotten, if it is on a grand enough scale?

I have a vivid recollection of the Muharram as it was celebrated in my native town of Broach, sixty or so years ago.

On the eve of the Muharram, certain Muslims of the town painted themselves yellow, drew black stripes on their bodies, donned peculiar head-dresses, and, armed with iron claws, played at being tigers. These "tigers" then went about the town sparring, shouting and pretending to fight one another, to the delight of the youthful inhabitants. I remember that during these days most of us little children also painted ourselves yellow and black and played at tigers in our houses. It was great fun.

On the day of Muharram the whole town collected at the

shops, or in windows, to see the *Tajia* procession pass by. The great attraction of the day was the men who lashed themselves with chains, shouting "Husain Ya Husain", and as the water-carriers drenched them at intervals, their thin blood drops were lengthened out into flowing reddened streams, giving us shivers.

II

I have seen the spot on which stood the famous Lumbini Forest, where Lord Buddha was born. Accompanied by my friend, Shri R. R. Diwakar, Governor of Bihar, I visited both it and Kapilavastu, the capital of Shuddhodana where reigned the father of Gautama, who later became the Enlightened.

I love to visit such places. India to me is the living Mother, and every time I visit her shrines, I feel a sense of physical identity and my love for her comes in fresh waves of intensity.

On the 16th, from Nutanva, the last railway station in Uttar Pradesh, we motored down to the forest which has now grown over the buried debris of Kapilavastu. The only relics of the city we could find were the remains of a huge tank with its broken embankments, nearly covered over with trees and shrubs. There was a small temple of recent date, dedicated to some goddess, to whom the villagers had been offering mud water-pots shaped like elephants. I wonder whether such peculiarly-shaped offerings had something to do with some long-forgotton Buddhistic tradition.

Then we returned to the spot where the Lumbini forest had once stood. You know how it derives its significance. When on the eve of her delivery, Mahamaya Devi left for her father's house at Devadah. On the way she rested in this forest of *shal* trees. As her pains started, she caught hold of the branch of a *shal* tree, and Gautama, who was to be the Buddha, was born. It was *Vaishakhi Purnima.*

Until only a few years ago, no one had been sure where

the Lumbini forest had stood two thousand five hundred years ago, but the site was identified by the chance discovery of the fragments of the broken pillar which had been erected by Asoka on the spot. The restored pillar now stands in its original position. On it is inscribed: "King Piyadasi—Beloved of the Gods—having been anointed for twenty years came in person and worshipped here."

The place was neglected even when Hieun-Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, visited it in the seventh century, for he reported having found the pillar split by lightning.

In the eighth and ninth centuries of the Christian era, Buddhism gradually disappeared from India and was replaced by Tantrism. A few years ago, however, it underwent a spurt of revival.

In 1944, on account of political, rather than religious reasons, the Bauddha *bhikshus* were prohibited from either preaching or ordaining anyone into the Sangh. This led to an agitation in the Buddhistic religious centres in Ceylon, Burma and Cambodia and the Dharmodaya Sabha was founded at Sarnath in order to deal with the matter.

In 1950, when popular government was established in Nepal, the prohibitory orders were cancelled. With the co-operation of the Nepal Government, the Dharmodaya Sabha installed the sacred relics of Sariputta and Mahamoggallana, the disciples of Lord Buddha, at Kathmandu.

III

I then returned to Gorakhpur. As you know, it is named after Gorakhnath, the great medieval saint who reorganised the Nathyogi Sampradaya. On our side the sadhus of this sect are called *Kanphata bavas*, for they pierce their ears for an ear-ring.

The head of this shrine in Gorakhpur is Mahant Digvijainath, a tall, well-built, educated person, with a modern outlook, who also runs a college. This is the one of the very few colleges in U.P. that has a sense of mission and its students are conspicuous by their disciplined behaviour.

In my young days the Gorakhpanthi sadhus visited Gujarat in large numbers. Gorakhtonk, a peak of Mount Girnar, is, as you know, one of their great shrines. The travelling minstrels of the sect also came to Broach, singing the ballads of Bhartrihari and Gopichand, both of whom, according to the tradition of the sect, became immortal in human body by giving up the world—one because his wife betrayed him, and the other because his mother found him too handsome to be allowed to die.

Sixty years ago, both of them were reported to be alive and walking about on the banks of the Narmada at a place of pilgrimage called Shulpanji. When I was a boy, this information was vouched for by a very old relative of mine, who, as a young man, had gone on a pilgrimage to Shulpanji and actually talked to them! This was direct evidence. Not even the Evidence Act will enable you to reject it!

But the most popular story in our day was that of the great Nathyogi Matsyendra Nath. I wonder whether you know something about him. Though a great ascetic, he fell in love with a lovely queen of Kamrup, where women were the lords—or shall I say ladies?—of creation, and men no better than Yahoos. After years of effort, his pupil Gorakhnath traced his master to where he was living in royal pomp, reminded him of his vows and brought him back to the ascetic fold. "*Chet Machhendra Gorakhaya*" has become a saying all over Northern India.

Gorakhnath was not the founder, nor even the first of the saints of this cult. The God Shiva himself is accepted as having been the founder of the sect. *Nathyogi sampradaya* appears to me to be a survival of the oldest ascetic order in India and possibly of the pre-Aryan age. Most of the other ascetic orders may have branched off from that parent stock. The scriptures of the *sampradaya* are *Shivagamas,* most of which are lost. The sect follows Shiva and Shakti worship. Its traditions, which are distinctly pre-Shankarite, emphasise *yoga* and specialise in developing

miraculous powers; its highest aim is the attainment of 'Shiva-hood' in life. In pursuit of this gospel the Nath-yogis give prominence to *hathyoga*, which is concerned essentially with attaining the physical indestructibility of the body, an aim which they shared with Pashupata and other ancient Shaiva cults.

Few historical data are available about Gorakhnath. Undoubtedly a powerful man, and one gifted with miraculous powers, he made his cult very powerful in Northern India. The shrines and following of the sect extended from Kabul to Assam. One of their main temples is in Nepal. I do not know what has happened to the one now situated in Pakistan.

IV

In the Gorakhnath Temple at Gorakhpur, I saw quite a few weird Nathyogis sitting between sacred fires. I had a great mind to go and talk to them, for I have little doubt that there are certain yogis in the sect who have developed supernatural powers. At any rate, it was one of the wandering *Kanphata bavas* who first shook my scepticism by the performance of a miracle.

Some time between 1918 and 1921, I was reading my brief in my chambers one evening after Court hours, when a Nathyogi with an ear-ring presented himself at the door and demanded ten rupees. Very much annoyed, I shouted for my chaprassi and told the *bava* to go away. "This is not the place for begging," I shouted. "Get out!"

The old man stood imperturbably in the doorway. "My son", he said, "Ramji is kind to you." I shouted again, but he only smiled.

"Give me ten rupees. Look at your hand. Ramji has blessings for you. Give me ten rupees."

Instinctively I looked down at my hand. On my right palm was imprinted in black Devanagari script, "Sri Ram". It would have taken no more than a feather to knock me

down. The man was eight feet away from where I was sitting and he had not come within touching distance.

I took out my purse which contained, I remember about twentyfive rupees. I handed them all to my chaprassi to give to the sadhu, who accepted the money, blessed me and left.

I rubbed my eyes. There was no question of its having been hypnotism, for I had to use soap before I could remove that sooty imprint.

This was one of the early occasions upon which I saw materialisation by yogic powers. I dare say the man knew no other feat than this. It may have been taught him by some guru, so that he should be able to impress his followers. In any case it was a phenomenon which confirmed my faith in the possibilities of yogic powers. These are not unnatural. It is only that they operate by laws which we have not yet learnt to consider as natural. Some day I will tell you of the various miraculous things of this kind which I have come across in the course of my life.

V

On the 20th of October, 1954, we went to Deva Sharif, a shrine near Barabanki which is twenty miles or so from Lucknow. It is the tomb of Haji Hafiz Syed Wāris Ali Saheb, a Sufi saint.

Born in 1819, of a devout sufi-family, Haji Saheb developed mystic tendencies early in life. Though not book-learned, be began to initiate disciples at the age of fourteen. The source of his power was his faith in God.

At fifteen he gave away all his properties at Deva and left for Mecca. From there, he proceeded on foot to Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Persia, Turkey, Russia and Germany. In Germany, it is said, he was the guest of Prince Bismark. In Constantinople he met Sultan Abdul Majid I.

In 1875 he returned to his home-village Deva. His relatives were uneasy, for they were afraid that this unexpected

visitor might claim the properties they were enjoying. But he soon left India again, journeying alone and on foot.

In 1899 he returned to Deva and settled there finally.

From the time of Haji Saheb's first visit to Mecca he had dressed himself in a single piece of yellow cloth. I saw his disciples wearing such clothes, and, but for their beards, I should have taken them for Buddha *Bhikshus.*

Throughout his life Haji Saheb was characterised by *Tawakkul* and *Taslim wa Raja:* complete dependence on God and resignation to His will; *Sharanagati,* as we call it.

He had foresworn possessions. He accepted no *nazar.* Whatever he was presented with, he gave away to others. He was truly God-minded, rising above and beyond mere religious beliefs. Among his disciples were not only Muslims but Hindus and Christians. He never asked any of his followers to abjure their own religion. To every one of his disciples he said: "You and I are the same"; and to the Hindu disciples he would say: "Believe in *Brahma*".

Haji Saheb had disciples in many parts of the world. A Spanish nobleman, Count Galaraza, came all the way to London to be initiated by him. When the Count failed to find him there, he came all the way to Deva. Haji Saheb said to him: "You are come and are united with me. Blessed be your coming. You and I shall be together." The Count ultimately settled in Calcutta and his will, a copy of which I saw, gave the residue of his property to the shrine.

Haji Saheb was a Sufi in the spirit of the great Jalaluddin Rumi: "Fools exalt the mosque, but ignore the true temple in the heart."

Haji Saheb never made any claims to supernatural powers, but many came to him and went away healed. He lived simply and humbly, and in God. "Love", he said, "is better than formal righteousness."

He died on the 7th of April, 1905. He appointed no successor, for, as he had said: "My creed is love, and a lover has no successor."

Haji Saheb was buried on the very spot where he died at Deva. Now it is covered by an elaborate monument, one of the finest in Uttar Pradesh.

When in the shrine I saw his photograph. He had a noble presence; handsome, impressive features, a broad intellectual forehead, magnificent and irresistible eyes; and on him was the peace of the dedicated.

The annual *Uras* was being held the day we went to Deva. The date of the *Uras* associated with his father, was also fixed by the Haji Saheb in a characteristic manner. He had only been three when he became an orphan, and he did not remember the date of his father's death. So he fixed the day on the *kadva-chauth*, when the harvest is gathered and the villagers are free to enjoy themselves.

Hundreds of the villagers had gathered at the *Uras*. Many were enjoying themselves in the exhibition and the merry-go-rounds were full of laughing children. A hockey match was being played enthusiastically.

In the evening we had fireworks which had been prepared by competing makers, all of whom, I understand, live in one village. The fireworks were magnificent and the crowds were full of joy.

The memory of Haji Saheb could not have been better celebrated.

LXIX

A LIVING MONSTER—THE SAPTARSHI ASHRAM —THE GANGA CANAL

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
February 27, 1955.

I FEEL in quite a gossipy mood. Didn't I tell you that Lucknow is unique? It always throws up something extraordinary. After the Wolf-Boy we had the treasure-hunt.

An enterprising gentleman went on digging down into old palace grounds to find buried treasure; he claimed positively to know the spot. But although it lasted for days, nothing came out of his strenuous toil except two or three coins of little importance. A cock was pressed into service; but it refused to work its magic; it found no treasure and died the next day.

It seems that the treasure-hunters in Lucknow are not familiar with the ways of buried treasures in Gujarat. In days gone by, every buried treasure had an attendant guardian angel, who would shift the treasure to another spot, if the treasure-hunter happened to be the wrong individual. The angel would only deliver the treasure to the right man.

No sooner is the Lucknow treasure-hunt over, than we had a monster possessed by no other town in India.

Have you seen the film "The Beast From Twenty Fathoms?" A monster had been hibernating in an iceberg for a few million years, when some scientists blew up the iceberg and released the imprisoned beast. Awakened from its long sleep, it went about sinking steamers till it marched roaring into New York and demolished sky-scrapers with its mighty paws.

One fine morning, a monster, half alligator and half tortoise and with a scaly body, a longish snout, but a long tongue, marched into the industrial capital of U.P.—Kanpur. There was panic all round, same as was in New York in the film. No one had seen such a monster before. Crowds gathered. Policemen brought forward their weapons. Unlike the New York monster, however, this, its small edition, was entirely non-violent. It cheerfully bore the blows which the Kanpurians inflicted upon it, and it survived them.

It was brought to our zoo at Lucknow. Scientists discovered that it was a five-foot pengolin, an ant-eating beast which could look like an alligator or a tortoise at will and could roll itself into a spiked ball not at all easy to handle.

It created a problem for us all. It only ate ants and termites, and Lucknow had to find a sufficient number of ants to keep the creature alive.

And then it died.

II

In the beginning of September, when we were in Calcutta, we visited the Sister Nivedita Girl's School. The school was set up in this backward area of the city by Sister Nivedita, that noble lover of India, herself. The present school—a very large one—which commemorates her services, is an extremely well-run institution, with a rare atmosphere of simplicity and religious devotion.

We also visited the Sharada Mandir, which is located on the top floor of the school. There live about twenty young ladies, most of them double-graduates, who are now undergoing the discipline of *Brahmacharinis* with the aspiration of some day reaching the status of a Dashnami *sanyasini*. The Bhavan, as you know, has contributed Kumari Kalpalata Munshi, one of its brilliant products, to this group. I do not know whether Shankaracharya, the founder ever thought of women *sanyasis*, but I am sure that neither Sri Ramakrishna nor Vivekananda would have had any objection to them.

These young ladies impressed me as being an enthusiastic band full of spiritual fire and the resolution to do selfless service. It was a joy for us to meet Kalpalata after two years.

This experiment will be watched with interest by the whole country. Nothing can help the Indian woman more than lady workers inspired by a sense of mission, for there are few women in India who work in the spirit of humility and faith, like, for instance, the Roman Catholic nuns. I have found in these nuns a passionate desire to work for delinquents, destitutes and the maimed—possibly as the result of training and tradition.

Our ordinary Indian women workers have no religious

urge and no sense of mission, and, in consequence, no abiding love for the destitute and the maimed whom they serve. Their work remains an uninspired routine of a wholly professional nature.

Next day we went to the Belur Math. When I visited it several years ago, the temple was incomplete. Now the image of Sri Ramakrishna is installed there and we offered it worship. We also paid our homage to the *samadhis* of Swami Vivekananda and Sharada Mata.

We then visited the Dakshineshwar Temple, so full of the memories of Sri Ramakrishna. We saw the room in which he had lived; the cot on which he had slept; the place where his mother had cooked his food and the terrace from which he had invoked the Mother to send his disciples. A visit to all these places brought me vivid memories of one of the noblest lives recorded in history.

We also offered flowers to the image of the Mother, worshipped by Sri Ramakrishna with such ardour and faith. Who can say that a stone idol cannot become a living God, if the worshipper has the necessary faith and self-surrender?

III

On October 11, we were in Hardwar in connection with the President's visit. He was due there on the 12th to inaugurate the *Saptarshi Ashram,* a handiwork of the indefatigable Goswami Ganeshdattaji.

The Goswami is one of the most remarkable men in India. He lives on alms, is a sadhu, dresses in white and works for social and religious uplift. His work is not altogether dissociated from politics.

Before the Partition he was a power in the Punjab. He was the unquestioned leader of the Sanatana Dharma Sabha of the province with its many schools and colleges and the guiding spirit of the Mahavir Sena, which helped in organising Hindu festivals, defended Hindus in trouble and controlled various newspapers.

With Partition, his beloved home-state was riven in two.

He then settled in Delhi. With his vast organising power he brought relief to the refugees in the distressing days of 1947, looked after them, housed them for some days in the Lakshminarayan Mandir and became, for many of them, both a material support and a spiritual guide.

The Goswami looks after many of the vast charities of Jugal Kishoreji, the eldest of the Birla brothers. He is the Chairman of the Arya Dharma Seva Sangh. There is no cause in which Hindu interests are involved that is not dear to him. The Punjab Sanatana Dharma Sabha still controls over a hundred schools, a number of colleges and several temples.

Some years ago, the Goswami discovered a forgotten ancient *Tirtha,* a couple of miles up the river from Hardwar. According to the *Puranas,* when Bhagiratha was bringing down the Ganga to the plains, she refused to move forward from the spot where the seven great *Rishis,* Vishvamitra, Vasistha, Jamadagni, Atri, Gautama, Bharadwaj and Kashyap—all now transfixed in the heavens as the Ursa Major—had their *ashram.* To pass near the *ashram* of one of the Seven would be to show disrespect to the others. So she halted there, till at a divine command she divided herself into seven streams serving all the *Rishis* at the same time.

At this traditional spot, the Goswami decided to construct an *ashram* as a monument to the seven ancient Fathers of our race whom we remember—often without being conscious of it—in many prayers and most rituals.

On October 12, when the President arrived, he worshipped the Ganga to the haunting Vedic chants. Since my childhood, I have never heard them without strange echoes being stirred in my heart. And as he poured flowers and rice on to the current, the fish, unafraid in this ancient sanctuary, flashed like dark gems in the surface waters.

In the evening the President inaugurated the *Saptarshi Ashram* with due rituals in the presence of about twenty thousand men and women. I was also asked to declare

open a monument to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. I was moved as I did it. He was the first among the great leaders of the country to take an interest in me at a time when I had just started in life and he continued to be very kind to me while he lived.

One of the noblest of men, from the mid-eighties of last century, Malaviyaji served the country and its culture with unwavering steadfastness. Among other things, we owe the development and spread of modern Hindi to him as much as to Tandon. Deeply learned, but unassuming, he embodied grace, patience and passionate love for the heritage of India, such as few of his contemporaries had. He built up the Hindu University at Banaras at a time when even the idea of such a thing was unfamiliar to our people. It is a pity, indeed, that there has been no permanent memorial to this architect of modern India, nor even a decent biography recording his achievements and personality. I wonder what prevents people from naming the Hindu University after him. If anybody deserves such a memorial, it is he.

IV

The next day we went to Rishikesh, where the Ganga is full of charm, but where the town, full of hideous, old buses, looks more like a third-rate modern suburb than a holy place. It is a centre from which most of the motor services start into the Himalayas. On the authority of many a happy dweller of this region, these services have contributed to this god-fearing region a new element. The people of this place were honest; crime was unknown. Then came the buses, and wherever they went crime followed.

We went to Muni-ki-Reti, crossed the broad, rushing waters of the Ganga in a motor launch and visited the Gita Bhavan, that vast sanitorium set in a religious atmosphere which has been constructed by the Gita Press of Gorakhpur. Here, hall after hall reminds us of the words and

deeds of Sri Krishna. Then we visited the Paramartha Ashram, where the devout congregate for *sadhana.*

We had our lunch at the Atmavigyana Bhavan of the Kali Kamaliwala Trust, a vast settlement intended for those who seek spiritual peace. I hope it does not become the usual sort of sanitorium, where there is everything but peace and nothing of the Spirit.

In the afternoon we visited the *Ashram* of Swami Sivananda. Once a successful doctor at Kuala Lampur, he has, for many years now, given up the world. From this far-off place, apart from *sadhana,* he preaches to the world the need for a saintly life and the approach to God through modern methods of propaganda. It was a happy crowd that we met. We were also surprised to find among the *sanyasinis* the young daughter of a Bombay friend, dressed in ochre-coloured clothes, her head clean-shaven, and happy.

V

We are in Hardwar.

The full moon of *Sharad Purnima*—October 12, 1954—is in the sky in full resplendence. As I stand in the balcony of the Canal Inspection Bungalow of the Mayapur Dam, I gaze upon one of the loveliest scenes I have ever seen.

In front of me the Ganga flows down from the distant horizon, beyond which stand the shadowy, dull-tinted Himalayas. Flowing towards the Bungalow, the river divides itself into two currents which sweep round on either side.

In the distance the river is a wide belt of frozen silver. Nearer the Bungalow the silver begins to melt, and the slow-moving liquid creeps towards me between the *ghats* and the *dharmashalas* on the one side, and the serried ranks of dark trees on the other.

Sprays of scintillating pin-points rise and fall; a million crestlets reflect the moon as the swift current rushes down in liquid splendour and in never-ending roar and hiss.

Wonder fills my soul. I see this broadening stream rushing down to the plains like a mighty living lyre of God, with its heart of music and the might of its sound, rising, sinking, swelling, as if in a great eternal song. No wonder that to see her, or to hear her sweep by, was to the *rishis* and poets to feel an indescribable ecstasy.

A few miles from here is the land of Gangotri and Jamnotri, of Kedarnath and Badrinath, of the great Shankara, of great sages and mythic rulers, of caves and forests where live men who seek God in the solitude of the Himalayan forests.

Verily, the banks of the Ganga from Rishikesh onwards form the land of the Spirit. The dark spectre of materialism has not yet raised its ugly head here. Men and women can live here without fear, wrapped in a godly life; and so can even the fish, in the sacred waters, unafraid of the hunger-lust of man.

VI

On the 10th December I was at Hardwar again to welcome the President of India. He had come there to inaugurate the Centenary celebrations of the Ganga Canal.

The Ganga Canal, opened in 1854, has been an epic, born of the imagination of Colonel Cautley of the Bengal Artillery. He was a true disciple of Bhagiratha, first and greatest of irrigation engineers, who, if our *Purnanas* tell the truth, brought down the Ganga right from the source to the Bay of Bengal and made India the land of plenty.

Cautley conceived the idea of this Canal; fought critics and opponents; moved the Parliament; succeeded in realising his dream. The Ganga Canal thus became the parent of all the irrigation works in modern India.

Rajashekhar, the great poet of the tenth century, as you know, has described the land between the Ganga and Yamuna from Vinashan *Tirtha* to Prayag as *Antarvedi*. The Ganga Canal, emerging from the Ganga at the Mayapur Dam cuts across this *Antarvedi* to pour the waters of the

Ganga in the Yamuna and to meet the parent stream at Kanpur.

Cautley had a hard time fighting the Railway engineers who did not want irrigation canals, but railway lines. The Railway engineers won. The result was well-defended frontiers and national unity. But Cautley has triumphed in this age of freedom. We have taken to irrigation in right earnest and his dreams are coming true in an abundant measure.

The Canal serves 4000 miles and another 4000 miles by subsoil tributaries. With its aid, over 340 lakhs of maunds of foodgrains are grown. By 1956 the food production will go up to 500 lakh maunds and by 1961, to 700 lakhs.

The Centenary celebrations went off very well. The President worshipped the Ganga, opened the pavilion of the Exhibition, inaugurated the celebrations and attended an evening party. The guests had a hearty lunch and the town was gay with illuminations at night.

I also had my share of the celebrations. I laid the foundation-stone of a bridge across the Ganga, thus connecting both sides of the river.

And we had a procession of boats. The boat in which the President and we sat, led. It had on one side a hood which looked like the Shesha-nag, on the other a tail which curled up vigorously. But as the boat started, the many-headed serpent moved with the tail forward!

LXX

NEO-MALTHUSIANS–POPULATION SUBSISTENCE –FAMILY PLANNING

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
March 13, 1955.

MANY PEOPLE in many countries are anxiously thinking how to eliminate wars from the world. This naturally leads to the question: What are the factors likely to cause wars?

A powerful though potential factor which is exercising thoughtful minds, is that the population on the globe is tending to outrun subsistence. The neo-Malthusians are hysterical on this point. With the doleful vision before them of Cassandra, that ancient prophetess of evil, they are awaiting the day of reckoning. The population of the world was only 73 crores in 1750; in 1950 it was 239 crores; and that, in spite of two devastating world wars, it is increasing by leaps and bounds. At this rate, they say that after years there will be a billion mouths without food.

Somehow I do not like such sterile arithmetical exercises projected towards an obscure future. Statistics are extraordinary things; they can prove almost anything and any two competent statisticians can generally be relied upon to disagree.

In the year 1952 statistics were flung in my face to prove that the country had a food deficit of seven million tons. I knew that this was nonsense, but I was not a statistician. Knowledge was therefore no match for mathematics. Within four weeks, however, everyone said that the country needed no more food imports. Ship-loads of imports arriving in our ports were simply rejected without so much as a "thank you".

As a result of all this, I refuse to be frightened by the

arithmetical prospect that population will shortly outrun subsistence.

From 1850 to 1950 food production increased faster than the population of the earth. Taking the U.S.A., the best-fed country in the world, in one year—1954—alone, a population of 1,60,000,000 showed the phenomenal increase by 28 lakhs. In that country, however, food production has increased in a much larger proportion. In 1870 a farmer's family in the U.S.A. produced food for itself and one more family; today, it produces enough food for seven other families.

II

The civilized world is now taking far-reaching steps to maintain a balance between population and subsistence. Soil conservation, afforestation and intensive cultivation are attracting increasing attention. Experiments are also being conducted under the guidance of the UNESCO for the revival of those waste lands, deserts and semi-deserts. which cover nearly a third of the earth.

The FAO is also assisting in a large-scale programme for the restoration of the fertility of the soil by afforestation, the fixing of sand-dunes, soil-analysis, and conservation and irrigation. "Everybody, everywhere—and more particularly the next generation,—" says an authority, "will feel in greater or lesser degree the effects of desert reclamation."

Our own Rajasthan Desert, 80,000 square miles in size, is the easiest to reclaim, for it is man-made. No, I am wrong; it is a *goat*-made. For centuries these creatures have been eating up every single blade of grass as it comes up out of the soil. Having finished with Rajasthan, they are already eating up the fertile tracts of the Agra district.

We have yet to realise that a country which breeds cattle lives for ever, while that which breeds goats is committing suicide. If *bakri-sadans*, like *gosadans*, were to be set up where goats and goat-keepers could be kept happily in segregation, we could easily add more fertility to the soil.

At the present time, attention in many countries is revetted on the engineering measures to control floods. These have become necessary in order to quieten popular clamour and to give immediate relief, but in the end, only reconditioning the catchment areas and mountain sides by tree-planting will solve the problem. The planned afforestation in these vital areas which is now favoured by soil experts, will mean the control of floods, less erosion, more food, more fuel, and in India, more cowdung made available for manure. All these mean more food.

III

At a higher level of scientific research, great progress is being made. It has been found, for instance, that algae, a floating vegetable substance found in the sea, can be made a valuable source of food.

The latest experiments in photo-synthesis conducted at the University of California, appear, again, to hold the secret of unlimited food-production.

The experiment is very interesting. The earth receives only a very small fraction each day of the one-hundred billion kilowatt hours of energy released every second by the .sun. But it is that little fraction which has provided the soil, gas and coal on this earth of ours. It is quite enough to warm the soil, to make plants grow and to keep going animal and human life.

In spite of its being only a fraction, during the three months of the growing season, this energy supplies to an acre of land a fraction equal to 250 tons of coal. But of this quantity only 3/10th of a ton is stored in the crop grown on that acre. By photo-synthesis, very much more than this infinitesimal fraction of the solar energy could be utilised. Cheap and ample food would be the result.

IV

In point of population growth, Japan and India are considered the 'problem' countries of the world. In India

the population has rapidly increased since 1900. The neo-Malthusians are very anxious to find out the time when we shall all become extinct.

With Dr. Barnett, in his book *The World's Food* I have a pertinent question to ask: "Has the consumption level in India risen or declined since 1900?" I do not know what the statisticians have to say, but I know how things were sixty years ago. Despite the growth in our population, the average man in the same stratum of society is certainly betterfed today than he was then.

We are told by competent authorities that if the population increases as at present, by 1981 we shall collapse under the pressure of increased population. I am not quite so sure about this.

In the dismal year 1950, when I had to handle Food and Agriculture at the Centre, the index of food production was 92. In 1953-54 it had risen to 122. The rate of agricultural investment has run between Rs. 250 and 350 crores. The index of industrial production which was at 105 in 1950 stood in 1953 at 135. The rate of capital formation as the percentage of the real national product, as corrected for the international account, has risen from 2 per cent in 1948-49 to 8 per cent in 1953.

The effects of our Five-Year Plan are only just beginning to be felt in the country. So far the rate of expenditure on development has not kept pace with estimates; the will to work has not spread evenly in all the States; many of our development programmes are still in their early stages.

Agricultural research is in the process of being translated into action. The Japanese method of paddy cultivation, for instance, has only just begun to attract enthusiasm. Rust-free wheat has recently been evolved and is in the experimental stage. A very large part of our ten-million cultivable waste has yet to be reclaimed, and our vast schemes of irrigation are either under construction or are still being planned.

The Community and the N.E.S. Projects have quickened

the tempo of rural development only during the last year. The Land Army idea is only beginning to get into its stride; in Uttar Pradesh alone, the people have contributed two crores of man-hours to the value of Rs. 2,60,00,000 in about three years by means of *Shramdan*. And the movement is bound to grow, both in this and other States as time goes on.

In complete defiance of the Western theories relating to under-developed countries, India is forming capital at a significant rate. We have already overcome the difficulty of converting capital formation into investment for the public sector.

If the present tempo of development continues, and a vast will to work—a moral quality—is released, our economic growth is likely to overtake the growth in population within the next five years.

V

But how can we balance population and subsistence if the philosophy of life made fashionable by the West continues to run amok? Such philosophy is accepted as a badge of modernity. Educated men come to believe in it implicitly. According to it, we must be economically dynamic; that is, we should become a race working to destroy nature; to invest life with artificial patterns; to struggle for ever to create an ever-higher level of living for all mankind.

The prophets of this gospel are rosy-eyed; they live on the anti-podes of the neo-Malthusians. According to them, the earth, the sea and the atmosphere can deliver an inexhaustible supply of raw materials. Under their influence, civilized man in the industrialized countries continues to consume the organic products of the land at a rate faster than that at which the population is growing. It is also far in excess of the rate at which the supply of raw materials can be drawn upon if they are to remain unexhausted.

Take one instance. Between 1890 and 1945 the population of U.S.A. multiplied very fast; its demand for organic products multiplied still faster, and thirty-one million acres were turned to non-agricultural use and became unproductive.

If a higher standard of living and the population both continue to grow, the resources must grow less. A time must come when the resources would be in short supply. Industrial expansion will be arrested. The social order built on it will then crumble.

There is enough on earth to supply all human needs, only if wants are curbed; if the philosophy of life is *Yuktaharaviharasya;*—if food and enjoyment are kept under reasonable control, not otherwise. The philosophy which worships unlimited expansion and ever-increasing standards of living is dangerous; it must give way to a truer faith.

The standard of living in India is abnormally low. It has to be raised and raised well. But that is not the same thing as adopting the philosophy of the West. We must nurture our soil, our forests and our water-supply; raise the level of living, but only to a point where we can lead ample, but austere lives.

We should not enter the mad race for higher and more complicated living; we should keep to the traditions of simple-living, so characteristic of India. We should not consume more than we produce.

Security lies in working with Nature and producing more than man consumes. This is applicable to all countries; more particularly to India.

But this would involve the development of moral qualities without which no self-restraint on the scale required would be possible.

We must realise that total welfare cannot be related exclusively to economic progress. In the long struggle for economic security, social, cultural and spiritual values are more important than the monetary expressions of the individual and of society.

Without the development of moral qualities, how can the will to work be evoked in a Welfare State if everyone looks to the State—that is, to all others except to himself-to raise the standard of life; when the paternalistic structure tends to destroy the initiative and incentive on which progress depends; or when coercion to extract work by regimented processes is excluded by the very nature of the freedom to which we are pledged?

These qualities can be fostered only by the leadership of that small class of men to whom the faith in moral values and self-dedication comes easily. The artists, the scholars, the teachers, the poets, the men of conscience, the dedicated men, are not made by monetary operations; nor by the trade-union bargaining; nor by economic and sociological analysis.

These men are the spoon-fed, defenceless babies of the economic community. You can easily destroy their class. You cannot create it in a generation or two. It cannot be developed in the spiritual hot-house set up by economic or social experts.

These qualities are the cumulative effect of generations of cultured forebears. It takes more than one generation of education to produce such men.

VI

Sterilisation is an imperative duty which society owes itself only when thoughtless parents threaten to burden the earth with diseased progeny. I can also understand planned parenthood resorted to by the weak, the diseased, the over-maternalised mother, or for those who have an unnatural horror of children. But these are vital problems of domestic life which are to be solved in the consulting room of the physician or the surgeon. They are no remedy for a spectacular arrest of over-population.

Even if the neo-Malthusians carry on hysterical propaganda, it is not likely to make any appreciable difference to the growth of population in Japan and India.

On the other hand, if planning aids are advertised with the same gusto as are Cocacola or Kolynos, moral disaster will follow. The sanctity of marriage will tend to disappear. Domestic life will disintegrate. Promiscuity will have no dangers. Farm-yard morals will acquire the odour of respectability, and self-restraint, the basis of the happy home, will be in jeopardy.

But family planning propaganda has a pruriency of its own. It appeals to those of us who suffer from a sort of schizophrenia. We are anxious to provide means—however amoral—to control the population; yet, in spite of the encouragement to indiscriminate self-indulgence so given, we are keen to preserve that moral basis of life which only comes from the sanctity attached to sexual life by self-restraint.

VII

Let me, therefore, pose the problem of the age.

Peace is the first essential of mankind.

Peace will not be maintained if population and the standard of living both continue to grow.

Peace will not be maintained if the State becomes so omnipotent as to invade by legislation or propaganda, the sanctum of domestic life and destroy the spritual superstructure of individual life, from which alone love of peace and human virtues spring.

Peace will not be maintained if the State anchors its faith on ever-increasing standards of life and assumes powers of universal control, and at the same time, arouses an irrepressible desire for more and more comforts.

Peace will not be maintained unless the State teaches population control and austere but ample standards of living by self-imposed restraint, drawn from spiritual strength.

Peace, therefore, will not be maintained unless the spiritual stature of man is raised by purging his heart of narrow

creeds, dividing cults and debasing hunger for material comforts, which can only be done by restoring it to God.

LXXI

THE PORTRAIT OF AN ARISTOCRAT—THE BARODA KHATPUT—OUR GATEWAY TO HEAVEN

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
March 27, 1955.

IN my letter No. LXI, I referred to Kishandas, my great grandfather, and his two sons: Kashiram and Anupram. The true aristocrat of the century, however, was Narberam Munshi, the youngest son of Kishandas, my grandfather.

A photograph and a portrait of him still survive to give me an idea of how he looked. He is short and stout. His chin ends when his throat begins and, no one can say where that is. His two small eyes look at you with pride and defiance. His ears stand out at right angles. His face, full but not flabby, bears the stamp of irascibility and an authoritarian temper. He wears the old-fashioned *jhaga* with Kashmiri embroidery and his huge turban is placed on his head at a rakish angle. The *dhoti* he affects is elegant with broad Nagpuri borders. His socks are brightly coloured and the points of his *nawabi* shoes curl up haughtily.

This is, indeed, an irascible, generous man, full of self-importance and of the love of life, who could hate and love well.

At eighteen my grandfather found employment as a Persian writer in the Broach court—a sort of ancestral zamindari. In 1842 Anupram, his elder brother, then Native Assistant to the Resident of Baroda, died. The Resident himself supported Narberam's application to succeed him,

saying, "His late brother served the Honourable Company faithfully, but did not flatter the Guickowar Government, which was the cause of his death owing to enchantment." The application was rejected.

Narberam knew both Persian as well as English well and the Assistant Judge thought him to be "a very clever and talented man, who bore a high character among the inhabitants of the town." In 1848—at twenty-nine—he was appointed Shiristhedar—a permanent assistant—to one Andrews, the district Judge of Surat. It was with this appointment that grandfather was to step into a most intriguing episode which was described in two of the voluminous blue-books of the East India Company and that was entitled "The Baroda Khatput."

II

Haribhakti was the owner of one of the rich firms of Baroda, then the capital of the Gaekwads. On his death he left two widows, the younger of whom—Joita Shethani —claimed to have given birth to a posthumous child.

The *munim* of the firm, Baba Nafra, sided with the elder widow and insisted that the child was spurious. Owing to his great influence with the Gaekwad he was able to have Joita Shethani arrested. The child was handed over meanwhile to the Arab guards, who murdered it.

Joita Shethani escaped from jail and fled to Bombay where she placed herself under the protection of the Company's Government. With the unlimited funds at his disposal, however, Baba Nafra was powerful with the Gaekwad, the Resident and the Governor of Bombay and the complaint of the helpless young widow remained unheeded.

During this time Andrews had been serving as Resident of Baroda, but he was now transferred to Surat as District Judge and Captain Outram, later to be Colonel and of the Mutiny fame, succeeded him.

Outram was an aggressively honest man. It was his sincere belief that the East India Company had embarked

on a righteous mission in India. On taking charge of his office, therefore, he at once secured the arrest of Baba Nafra and started an enquiry into the *munim's* intrigues against Joita Shethani.

In the course of the enquiry a memorandum was found among the papers which ran: "Rupees three thousand and one paid to Saubhagyavati Bai Saheb and rupees hundred given to Saheb for being handed over to Ladkoba." On seeing this the so-called Native Assistant to the Resident had a whispered conversation with Shambhuram, the Kotwal of the Gaekwad, who was present. Outram overheard the name of Andrews while they talked, grew suspicious and asked indignantly: "How dare you refer to the British ex-Resident in this matter?"

Shambhuram Kotwal replied: "This is an account of the bribe given by Baba Nafra to one Saubhagyavati Bai Saheb, who is no other than Dulhin, the mistress of Andrews. Ladkoba was his clerk and this money was evidently passed on to Andrews."

Outram was outraged. On August 31, 1850 he wrote to Andrews, asking him to say whether or not he had taken a bribe.

Andrews was a trained lawyer, and knowing well the distinction between suspicion, charge and proof, he asked Outram how he had come to the conclusion that "Saubhagyavati" was the same person as his mistress, Dulhin and that the memo referred to himself.

Outram hated lawyers and everything to do with law. He had come to India to establish the rule of righteousness and was prepared to stand no nonsense. He sent back the strong rejoinder: "I am not an Old Bailey attorney; I am a British officer."

On September 28th, my grandfather accompained by his lawyer uncle, arrived at Baroda where he had been sent by Andrews to take inspection of the documents involving the ex-Resident. This Outram allowed him to do but in the presence of the Native Agent and the Kotwal, who, as ill-

luck would have it, happened to be a relation of the Munshis, and their enemy.

Grandfather did not behave like an inspection clerk; there could be no doubt about that. He spread his net far and wide in the interests of his chief. The Kotwal, the family foe, carried tales to Outram. Grandfather's presence in Baroda became unsafe, his arrest was imminent. Without ado promptly he wound up his work and hurried back to Andrews at Surat.

A vigorous correspondence between Andrews and Outram ensued. Andrews complained "You did not help my Shirishtedar properly; you prevented him from taking a proper inspection of the papers; Shambhuram Kotwal and your Native Assistant conspired to ruin Narberam's attempts to vindicate my character."

Outram's reply was equally aggressive. "Narberam, he was a wily native" he said. "He started taking copies of papers not relevant to the case; he engaged persons to spy on my Native Assistant. He also went about telling people that I was a mere soldier; that I did not understand my business; that I was likely to be transferred; that if a civilian officer came in my place, all the opponents of Andrews would be punished. And this native went further: he alleged that I—Outram—had been won over by cheats and that a committee had already been appointed to inquire into my conduct. This wicked Shirishtedar of yours even insulted me and the Gaekwad. . . ."

The whole matter went up in appeal to Lord Falkland, then Governor of Bombay. Falkland severely censured Outram for indulging in an unwarranted attack on a British officer, but he also blamed Andrews for sending his Shirishtedar to inspect the books. Outram, in brief, was foolish, but Andrews was innocent and the only guilty person was the native, Narberam. The Governor issued orders that grandfather should be punished.

Outram was furious. He wrote an angry letter to the Governor and resigned his post. The matter went up to

the Directors of the East India Company in London. They held that though Outram had no doubt been foolish, he should be re-employed when a suitable vacancy occurred. As Andrews had died in the meantime, nothing could be done about him. Narberam was the villian of the piece and should be debarred from further promotion.

A fine example of British justice, this! Two British officers quarrel and, as a result an Indian's career is ruined.

But the 'Baroda Khatput' was to have a curious finale. Baba Nafra was sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment. Joita Shethani returned to Baroda, her honour vindicated and grandfather, having resigned his post in indignation, returned to Broach to become the undisputed monarch of the Munshi Heights. He was only thirty-two at the time.

III

Grandfather was an old-world Indian aristocrat to his finger-tips. In the morning, after his bath, he went to the family shrine, performed *sandhya* and did *puja* to the family deity Mahadeva. Mondays were, of course, reserved for the ceremonial known as *rudri*.

One morning in 1856, says the family tradition, grandfather was performing his *puja* in the little family shrine when Nana Saheb, the leader of the Great Revolt of 1857, came to see him in the guise of a sadhu, who was busy collecting money for the campaign he was planning. After a whispered conversation it is said that grandfather gave him Rs. 5,000.

This incident was not a thing to be advertised; it was only mentioned in the family circle in whispers and even as forty years later when I was a boy. It certainly was not very safe to let it be known that a Munshi of the Heights had helped the leader of the Anti-British Revolt, but it shows what ostensibly pro-British Indians felt about the new foreign rulers. This incident came into my mind when

people privately placed thousands at the disposal of the Congress leaders during the Bombay *satyagraha* of 1930.

Grandfather was held in tremendous awe by everyone who knew him. When he sat down to his morning meal, the only persons who dared serve him was grandmother, Daya Ma. If someone else happened to be there he was most unhappy; anything might go wrong and grandfather was apt to explode in a leonine roar.

After a little rest, grandfather would put on clean white garments of the finest *mulmul.* He was rather fastidious about his clothes. Every week they were sent to fashionable Surat by bullock cart to be washed, for the dhobis of Broach were reckoned to be no good.

Grandfather's favourite place was near the window facing the public road and no one could pass by it without making him a low *salaam* or reverential *Namaskar,* and without offering an excuse for not being able to come in to pay their respects. Presently friends would drop in and a *darbar* would be held. Discussions were held on all sort of topics; affairs of the caste or of the town; astronomy, Ayurveda, the *Shastras,* even alchemy. Among the few papers of his which I came across half a century later, I found recipes in Sanskrit and Persian, magic incantations, even a few notes in English, all indited in a firm, elegant hand.

There was always a resident musician in the house to enliven the tedium of an uninteresting evening and sometimes a visiting musician would come to pay his respects, to sing a couple of songs and to receive a suitable gift. Often an intimate friend—say, for example the Desai of Broach, another leading man of the town—dropped in. According to the fashion of the times, they had a common interest, and a live one too, in the person of a Muslim dancing girl, who was almost a member of the family. I was told, indeed, that she was in the habit of visiting the household, of chatting with the ladies, and of teaching the children a tune or a song.

In my early days, grandfather was remembered by elderly people for a unique service he had rendered to the ancient town of Broach. The British Collector of the District decided to shift the cremation ground and the townspeople were shocked. It was a sacrilege, for the *Puranas* had sung of the sanctity of *Dasasvamedh* for centuries. Grandfather was requested to intervene, whereupon he met the obdurate Englishman. "The site is sacred; you cannot change it", he said. "Ages ago the demon Bali performed the ten horse-sacrifice here to win the rulership of the gods. Here it was that God, as the Divine Dwarf, pressed him down to the nether world. Since then the spot is the gateway to heaven. How then can you change it?"

I have little doubt that this argument went home, whether the British Collector could make any sense of it or not, for good fellow that he was, he rescinded his order. Up to now our gateway to heaven stands exactly where it was since the days of the Divine Dwarf and I hope it will continue so to stand, that all the residents of Broach may take a direct flight to the land of our ancestors.

To grandmother, a saintly woman, her husband was a god to be worshipped with the rare devotion of the old-world Hindu wife. When grandfather was dying, she refused in the spirit of a true *sati*, to contemplate the fearful prospect of surviving her husband. She therefore went into the family shrine and begged Mahadevji, our family deity, to take her away before her husband joined his forefathers. Her prayers were answered. She suddenly fell ill and died, and a few days later, grandfather joined her.

All this happened in 1896, when my father, Maneklal, grandfather's third son, was only sixteen.

LXXII

KONARAK—WONDER HORSE—EROTIC SCULPTURE

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
April 10, 1955.

ON February 15 we were at Cuttack, on my first visit to Orissa. I had looked forward to it for several years.

Cuttack, like Broach, is a narrow, but long town, built along the bank of the Katjuri river. The Government House is built right on the bank of the river which at the moment is nothing but an expanse of sand.

Over a cup of coffee, Kumaraswami Raja, the Governor of Orissa, and my old friend Harekrushna Mahtab (now Governor of Bombay), whom I had not seen for about three years, and myself talked of many things; one topic of our conversation being New Delhi and its climate—always a favourite one with politicians.

We set off for Konarak. Certain sections of the road were in such a bad condition that the car—a heavy Humber—went forward bumping every second in spite of the fresh earth thrown on the road to make it level. I have left my horse-riding days some thirty-two years behind; so when I was thrown up and down by the springing seat, I heard my bones rattle in my skin.

We passed through the streets of small villages, flanked by houses with mud-walls and thatched roofs. The walls of better-class houses were adorned with crude devices painted on them in *chunam* (lime). We were near the sea, though we could not see it. The countryside had, therefore, a peculiar quality with long stretches of paddy-fields. Mango-trees crowned with heavy foliage, banana trees, date-palms, cocoanut trees and thatch-covered fields were everywhere.

Men and women, most of them clothed in one garment apiece, and children dressed exactly as they were born,

stood staring goggle-eyed at the heavily escorted flag-flying car. We also met school-children dawdling on their way to school, each with a dual-purpose palm-leaf mat—an umbrella for the sun and a seat in the school. The onlookers had not yet caught the "Jai Hind" mood; they were just stolid.

II

As we bumped our way forward, we saw in the distance a casuarina forest. Then the top of the Black Pagoda—as the English mariners called it—came into view. This was the famous Sun Temple of Konarak.

The sea is a short distance away from the site; the Chandrabhaga river, now a stretch of sand with the apology of a stream, is a couple of miles away.

Once Konarak was a port, and, like Prabhas, a place of ancient sanctity. The sacred Chandrabhaga then emptied itself into the sea as it washed the temple-site, similarly as at Somnath. But there, vandalism had destroyed the shrine; here at Konarak, Nature had done that work. The sea receded and sand-dunes silted up the Chandrabhaga. The site was deserted and the temple no longer attracted worshippers except on the seventh day of the Magh month, sacred to the Sun, when even now pilgrims are drawn to it.

The temple lay neglected; cracks appeared in the walls and the heavy stones of the tower fell down. Sand soon covered the shrine, which was once the wonder of India and the hope of millions.

Thanks to Lord Curzon, the splendid ruins were rescued from the sands and conserved.

Konarak is a marvel of structural effort, gigantic like the Pyramids, exquisite in every detail as the beautiful Sun-temple at Modhera.

Between 1238 and 1264, Narasimhadeva, king of Kalinga, had it built. Twelve thousand masons, with the aid of thousands of other workmen worked for sixteen years. Huge stone-slabs were quarried a great distance away and

brought to the site on rafts, hauled up to amazing heights, placed in position and carved to prefection. It is an example of efflorescent Orissan art which had then reached its high water-mark.

The front porch, called Jagmohan, is 128 feet high; the *Vimana,* the tower, which once crowned the sanctum, was 228 feet high. The *kalasa,* the crowning stone-slab, as it lies on the ground, is twenty-five feet thick, 2000 tons in weight.

The *navagraha* lintel on the eastern gate still lies in perfect condition, but in two pieces of 19 feet by 3 feet by 3 feet. In its original position it was supported by an iron beam measuring twenty-three feet by nine inches square, a miraculous feat of engineering performed in primitive forges by crude manual labour. The secret of its manufacture has been lost.

On the lintel are carved the nine *grahas* (planets of astrology)—the Sun, the Moon, Mars and Mercury; Jupiter—*Brihaspati* with a beard,—Venus and Saturn; *Rahu,* the ascending node as the demon with a fearful face and a sabre tooth and *Ketu* the descending node with a tail: the nine powers which, according to astrologers, decide man's fate.

III

The design of the temple is grandiose; the effect, elemental. The *kalasa* was a huge lion rampant upon an elephant. The height of the lion rises 20 feet above a 15 feet base. On all sides you see fierce rampant lions, the crouching, helpless elephants below, and mutilated human bodies crushed underneath. This is a favourite motif in all Orissan architecture; but in Konarak, in proportion and effect, the motif had been perfected.

There are sentinels on what were originally the gates. On the eastern gate stand two large-sized lions; on the northern, two elephants. On the southern side, evidently on a platform, are horses suggesting massive strength and mobile ferocity; and front hoofs are cruelly placed on a

fallen warrior who helplessly holds a shield, his face portraying great anguish. A rider with sword in hand stands beside each horse in a pose suggestive of pride and victory. These horses have been carved with unique vitality.

Praxiteles' horses are the wonders of the world; so are these. To the Greek horses, the genius of a sculptor has imparted power, mobility, restlessness. To the horses in Konarak, the Indian sculptor with equal creative power, has imparted anger, ferocity, determined and deadly power.

As you enter the front gate you cross the *Natamandap* with four entrances and richly carved pillars. It is so arranged that as the Sun rises, the first rays pierce its interior to light up the porch or the Jagmohan.

The temple consisting of the porch or the Jagmohan and the central tower over the Garbhagriha called *Vimana,* are in the form of a huge chariot of the Sun drawn by seven horses. The chariot has 12 large wheels beautifully carved in stone on both sides, symbolically showing the periods of the year. Every portion of the intervening space is richly carved.

Each carving has a main theme—the efflorescence of elemental passion, ferocity, death, misery, mobility, power and unsophisticated sexual enjoyment. The panels depict imaginary lions like griffin; elephants running, trotting, jumping; men on running horses, armies marching, *sadhus* preaching, drummers in ridiculous head-dresses beating drums; girls dancing in every pose; *nagas* and *naginis*—serpent gods and goddesses—standing intertwined, making love; and amorous men and women in a variety of poses—all carved in beauty and realism. Everything is mobile; everything expresses the elemental power of the Sun.

On three sides of the porch have been carved life-size statues of the Sun or Arun, his charioteer. One of them is still intact, erect, highbooted as in the Sun Temple of Gujarat, majestic and yet divinely sweet.

We descended into the *garbhagriha.* The tower, as I

have mentioned, had disappeared long ago. The central pedestal was empty. The tradition has it that the central image of the Sun was removed to the Puri temple. We saw it there, concealed behind a modern image, perhaps to save it from the ruthless hands of vandalism. Unfortunately we could not see it in detail.

IV

The amorous carvings have often evoked the wrath of modern men and the supercilious and ignorant critics of Indian art. Such criticism is natural, human confidence in its own judgment being what it is.

But humbly I must enter a caveat against people of one generation, brought up with its own standard of taste, sitting in judgment on the taste of another generation, a different age or a different social or aesthetic tradition. There is no universal criterion of taste or delicacy for all things in all times. The sooner this is realised, the better will it be for art.

Indians are shocked at the over-exposed torso of Western women. The King of England was shocked to find Gandhiji attending at a Buckingam Palace reception with his knees exposed. The Balinese girl would be shocked at the indecent manner in which the Indian woman overdrapes herself. And I have seen respectable Indian women drawing an end of their saris over their eyes lest their chaste eyes might fall upon the shameless perfection of the marble Venus in the Bombay Museum.

In 1928 Professor Anandshankar Dhruva and myself were members of the Baroda University Commission. A respectable middle-aged lawyer of Baroda appeared before us as a witness. After giving us his views on university education, he ended up by saying:

"Sir, if you have a university in Baroda, do not prescribe obscene works like Jane Austen's."

My eyes widened with horror. *Pride and Prejudice*

obscene! Jane Austen, the symbol of English respectability must have turned over in her grave.

I protested indignantly: "Surely, you had *Shakuntala* as your textbook in your college days. What about it?"

The lawyer turned to Professor Dhruva and smiling, said: "Sir, Dhruva Saheb was our professor in those days and he used to explain away the obscenities."

I looked at Dhruva; he felt like hiding himself underground.

"Have you read *Gita Govind* or *Janakiharan*?" I asked.

"No, Sir," came the answer.

I could find nothing more to say. A middle-class Gujarati gentleman of prudish taste possibly brought up in the strict code of Shikshapatri sitting in judgment over Jayadeva's immortal poem was more than enough for me.

The Age of Konarak in Orissa—mid-thirteenth century—was a happy age. Women at that time went about with uncovered flowerdecked heads. Men and women mixed without fear of abduction as an instrument of brutal conquest, and segregation of women was unnecessary. *Gita Govind* was sung in courts, temples and homes as a poem of beauty, if not a scripture. Purdah was unknown. Educated men studied the science of Erotics and discussed it in learned assemblies. Marriage was a sacrament; women's loyalty deathless. Illicit love was not respectable because it was gaily dressed in gown and ripples as in the courts of France.

Why should I care to justify the Konarak masters to modern eyes? In their eyes they were depicting a truth: inter-mingling of human bodies as an elemental power of tremendous significance inspired by the supreme creator of all vitality, the Sun. They could not realise at that time that the wonders which they were carving would be looked at by eyes to which the body beautiful would no longer be divine; to which the natural would not be admirable; to which universal creativeness could not be presented without evoking lewdness.

The art is sensual, *par excellence.* It lacks the infinite tenderness and the innocent nudity of the lovers of the Ajanta frescoes and the Ellora sculptures. We in our days would not tolerate such frank portrayal of sensuality. Nor would modern taste approve of it. But that is no reason for attributing to the artists of Konarak disgusting lewdness nor to the society of their day lack of moral sense.

V

While we were at Konarak, a shower of rain fell nearby. The fresh new earth scattered by the authorities to facilitate the passage of the gubernatorial car over the rut-broken road, had turned to sticky mud. And as we returned, our cars got stuck, and had to be pushed. More than once we had to walk part of the way.

But Puri at last! In the Government House, the freshening sea breeze was blowing from the direction of the beach to remind us of dear old Juhu.

LXXIII

MY LAST BOYHOOD FRIEND—EARLY STRUGGLES —GOOD-BYE

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW,
April 24, 1955.

IN January, 1955, when on my visit to Bombay, I went to see D.S., who was lying seriously ill in a Nature Cure clinic at Malad. The last time I had seen him was three years before that, and I had bidden him good-bye, for he was very ill. In my hurried visit to Bombay in 1954 I had been unable to find time to visit him. This year, therefore, I meant to take no chances. Next time, perhaps, when I

went to Bombay, who could tell but that this last of the cherished friends of my boyhood would have gone.

When I saw D.S., he was nothing but skin and bone. His long nose looked artificial; his over-sized eyes unnaturally wide; his massive forehead unreal. He was waiting for the end, cheerfully and without a complaint.

II

Fifty-eight years ago, my father brought him to me. He was five years my senior, but my old textbooks were to be handed over to him, for I had just passed into the fifth standard while he was still in the fourth.

His father—a village schoolmaster, just retired on a pension of about Rs. 5/- a month—had come to live on Munshi Heights and had been appointed our new family Shukla. His duties were to read the *Mahabharata* to my uncle every evening for three rupees a month, an additional rupee or so being thrown in for worshipping our family deity. On this pittance Shukla maintained a family which, besides himself and his wife, consisted of two daughters and three sons, of whom D.S. was the youngest.

Poorer than poverty though this little family was, it lived happily. Throughout the day every member was cheerful. After the evening meal, the family would gather together to talk of the day's happenings. Loud and irrepressible laughter would then echo throughout the streets, to the shocked surprise of the respectable Munshis, who were unable to understand how a family could go about roaring with laughter every day of their lives. But that family had what we had not, intense mutual attachment, the capacity to find fun in trivial things, and an utter absence of malice or discontent.

I handed over to D.S. my old text-books, half-written notes and stubs of used-up pencils. From the next day, we began going to and returning from the High School together.

Even then D.S. was a wizard. Within a week my tat-

tered old text-books had been rebound, the pencil stubs reduced to a useful size and mended and the blank pages of my half-written notes stitched together to make new notes for him.

But the wizard did not stop there. Morning and evening, he came to me, and as we gossiped, he tidied my table and arranged my books, which were generally scattered in all directions. Soon, even my text-books were in new brown covers and my pencils had been carefully mended. In fact, under the deft hands of D.S. my table began to look a marvel of neatness. I was completely spoiled. D.S. was so willing to be useful—and so unostentatiously—that he would never allow me to learn the art of arranging things for myself.

D.S. and I were promoted from standard to standard, but always with a year between us, and every year, D.S. inherited my text-books, note-books and pencils. The only difference was that he stood first in his class and I was one of the last in mine.

D.S. knew many Vedic *mantras* and a few rituals, some of which he taught me. After I had been given my sacred-thread, we sometimes sat down to perform our *sandhya* together. I did things in a hurry and often looked at him to see whether he had finished. But he was meticulous; not even a crawling fly would make him open his eyes while he was doing his *japa*.

I was very fond of reading novels. When I had passed out from the fourth standard, Father presented me with some of the novels of Scott and Dumas in four anna editions. I did not understand the language properly, nor could I grasp the full tenor of the stories, but by ceaselessly trying to read them, I gathered something from them. When D.S. and I returned from school, I kept him busy listening to my recitals of what I alleged were the stories of Scott or Dumas. In fact, they were nothing of the kind. What I narrated to D.S. was something which I had gathered by a superficial glance at the novels; the rest was

my own invention. D.S. was a patient auditor. I loved to talk; he to listen.

I matriculated and joined the Baroda College. The next year D.S. passed the examination, standing first in his class, and he too joined the College, Father giving him some help. Two years later, however, Father died. We were too poor to help D.S. and he left for Bombay to earn his way to a degree.

III

During the years that we were together the great joy of our lives was early morning walk in the winter.

We rose from our beds at about 4-30 a.m. and shivering with cold walked through the dark, deserted streets of Broach, freshly watered by the water-wagons. The cold breezes from the Narmada kept us shivering and the fragrance of the drenched earth filled the air. The songs of the housewives as they ground corn before daybreak, accompanied by the melody of the whirling grinding stones, floated on our ears.

We left the town behind and passed under the culvert over which the railway passes. We went through the fields, waist high with waving corn. Cattle, let out for grazing, looked at us with suspicious glances.

We reached the little hills on the banks of the Narmada. They were our discovery and we therefore had a proprietory interest in them. Even to-day I wish I could go there some morning and feel a little boy again.

The sun rose on the distant horizon from behind the Rajpipla Hills. There was now a little warmth in the air, so that the cold was bearable. We sat on the top of one of the hills, breathing in the fresh air of the morning, enjoying the scenery and looking at the rays of the sun as they flashed in the flowing waters. All the time I was indulging in a series of monologues with D.S. as my sole audience. I told him of my emotions and fancies and narrated to him the stories I happened to be reading.

I read and re-read my favourite novels by Scott, Dumas, Lytton, Mrs. Henry Wood and Marie Corelli understanding them a little better every time. But every time I read them fresh, I narrated them to D.S. The 1904 version of *The Three Musketeers* for instance was different from that of 1902. D.S. never read novels; he invariably gathered them from me. But I wonder whether he ever discovered the difference in the changing versions; possibly he did; but never told me that I was inventing lavishly.

IV

In 1907 I came to Bombay for my law studies. One wet early morning in June, D.S. received me at the Charni Road Station. He took charge of my trunk, I carried my bedding. And as we passed through the streets of Bombay, then stirring into life, I felt that a new chapter had begun for me.

Huge buildings like silent giants stood on both sides of the road. I looked upon them with awe. Behind them was mysterious life. They seemed to hold my future and my hopes.

I was my mother's only son and for a few weeks my maternal uncle tried to make me comfortable in his two-roomed tenement in a filthy, foul-smelling Pipal-wadi chawl. Besides himself, his wife and a child, my uncle had his two other brothers and four paying-guests staying with him. And to reach the main street we had to wade through mud and water, sometimes jumping from stone to stone!

D.S. introduced me to his friends in the Wilson College, who also became my friends. He was a walking gazetteer. We scarcely met anyone whom he did not know well. His secret was that of ungrudging helpfulness to everyone. If anybody wanted anything to be done, he had only to mention it and D.S. would do it. By this indispensability to everyone with whom he came in contact, D.S. had become

a power in quite a large circle of elderly friends ruling not from above, but from below.

He took complete charge of me. By means of private tuition he maintained himself somehow and managed to study in the Wilson College.

I had brought only twenty rupees with me and my first problem was to get enough money to enable me to live in Bombay. Between D.S. and myself we evolved a plan to find it. I had secured the Elliot prize of Rs. 105/- to be given in books for standing first in English in my College. D.S. took me to a well-known firm of booksellers whom he knew and after a little talk, entered into a bargain with them. As a result, they submitted a bill for Rs. 105/- to my College for the books to be sent to me. When the money was received, the booksellers were good enough to give me five rupees worth of books and the remaining Rs. 100/- in cash. This was the capital with which I started.

D.S. was then living with three friends in a small room, eight feet by six, in a lane in Anantavadi, for which they paid Rs. 5/- by way of monthly rent. I joined them as the fifth partner, contributing my one-fifth share.

D.S. also introduced me to a cheap "Eating House", as it was then called, at Kalbadevi where he took his meals for Rs. 5 or 6 a month. I too joined the "Eating House". But my health was delicate. I could not do without ghee and milk. D.S. was also in a mood to indulge in a little luxury for himself. So we bought a small quantity of ghee and put it in two bottles which we carried in our pockets at meal time, and out of which we poured a few drops on to our bread.

Milk was a serious problem. I simply could not live as D.S. did, on only one pice worth of the tea which was in all the tea shops referred to as 'Single'. So, on our way to the "Eating House" I fortified myself morning and evening, at a *bhaiya's* shop with one anna worth of milk. So life went on.

My Rs. 100/-, the gains of a harmless fraud, disappeared

fast, and we began to make elaborate plans to become rich. One evening D.S. took me to a wealthy gentleman whom he knew and whose son badly needed illumination at the hands of some competent tutor. He lived on the fourth or fifth floor at Sheikh Memon Street. In an unusual fit of exuberance, D.S. introduced me as the son of the deceased Deputy Collector, Rao Bahadur Maneklal. To my horror I found that the rich man came from my own district and had known Father well! Many years ago, he said sweetly, the Rao Bahadur had conferred some favour on him. Then he went off into ecstatic praise of Father's excellent qualities and with a mournful face regretted his premature death. I looked helpless. How was I to ask for employment from a person who looked upon me as a visiting prince? We returned, empty-handed and heart-broken. That was my first and last attempt to earn money by licking cubs into educational shape.

But the resources of D.S. were inexhaustible. Some days later, he took me to the composing room of the *Indu Prakash.* He knew someone there, and I was straightway appointed proof-reader extraordinary to that paper. Every evening I walked my weary way—three-and-a-half miles, from the Law class to my room; and on the way I dropped in at the *Indu Prakash* office and collected the galleys. After our visit to the "Eating House", with the assistance of D.S., who had already added proof-reading to his accomplishments, I would correct the proofs. At 10 p.m. we would go back to the newspaper office, return the proofs and receive my daily wages, which came to about 6 or 8 annas. I think I was paid at the rate of one or two annas per galley, I forget which.

I wanted to read and write on an ambitious scale. The next problem that we had to face therefore was how I was to do it. D.S. knew an old Parsi gentleman on the staff of the Petit Library and he took me to him. This kindly-eyed old gentleman walked into the conspiracy. I was given a small table to sit at. A file of issue slips he arranged, was

to lie in front of me. If anybody ever asked me why I was there, I was to refer to that old gentleman. He would always be there to certify that I was doing some honorary work for him.

For about three years, on most of the days while I was in Bombay, I spent five or six hours in the Petit Library. From time to time, D.S. would come to me during the day from the neighbouring office where he was employed and we would replenish ourselves with two 'Singles'. It was in the Petit Library that I first wrote an eloborate article on "The Conquest of Somnath" which was published in 1909 or 1910 in a magazine very well known in those days called *East and West.*

V

A few years ago a very interesting incident took place. I had to prove before an arbitrator that what little I had made was the result of what, according to Hindu Law, are known as 'gains of science', and not as accretions to my ancestral property. I asked D.S. whether he would give evidence on my behalf and, lo and behold, when he looked up his old diaries, there was a ledger account carried forward from year to year under the heading 'Kanubhai'. At foot of the account was eight or nine rupees still due from me to D.S.! Like a wise debtor I had forgotten to pay the debt. Like an *un*wise creditor, D.S. had forgotten to demand it of me.

Nothing disturbed D.S.'s cheerfulness. He took everything he had to face as if it was the most ordinary thing in life: poverty, struggles, disappointments, the incorrigible boys who were entrusted to his care. I, on the other hand, was restless, ambitious, happy or unhappy, highly emotional. And the pair of us walked up and down the streets of Bombay. That is how I came to know most of its localities.

When D.S. first took me to the Napean Sea Road, I was so blue with envy and rage, at the sight of the palaces, that

I decided not to visit the place again. What did I want with them and their splendour?

In those days our greatest moments came after our evening meal. On several days in the week we would go up to the Wilson College Hostel, where I would join my friends in songs of all kinds. Of course, D.S. never sang, but would join in by clapping his hands. Then we would go to the Chowpatty sands and sit till past midnight, sharing one anna worth of sugarcane pieces.

VI

Life changed, I went ahead with my Law Examinations and was enrolled on the Original Side Bar of the High Court in 1913. Success came my way and then money. But D.S. and I were just the same: I talking to him of my triumphs and failures; he, helping me with odds and ends, buying for me whatever I wanted; never demanding, always giving. Meanwhile, he was plodding his slow way upwards. He passed his LL.B. examination, saved enough money from his tuition fees to buy a *sanad* and became a solicitor's clerk. His passports, as always, were his precision, his thoroughness, his good temper and his serviceableness. An appreciative master made of him, first, a managing-clerk and then induced him to sign articles without taking a rupee.

D.S. passed the LL.B. and the Solicitor's examination, not at a bound, but slowly and patiently, appearing in one subject after another every year, working away for all he was worth, both as a clerk and a good Samaritan, all his professional hours.

The solicitor whom he served took a parental interest in him and when he qualified, made him a partner, without premium for goodwill. I hope there are other solicitors in the world with such hearts for deserving young men.

During the course of the years, D.S. lost his parents and brothers; and his sisters were married. He was alone, but he invariably picked up an orphan from the orphanage of

which he had once been the manager. He brought the boy up, educated him, got him married and settled him in life. I do not remember how many such boys he helped.

For many years no one in our caste thought that D.S. was in the marriage market. He sometimes spoke to me of what he felt about the way in which the Fates were denying him a wife and on this subject he was often caustic.

But he always spoke in an uncomplaining way and without anger, though loneliness was telling on him. One of the magazines which I used to edit, published a story of his which was in the nature of a self-confession. An unmarried man becomes disgusted at the way in which everyone exercises authority over him. Ultimately, he decides to marry, his reason being that, he must have at least one person over whom he can exercise authority.

When D.S. became a managing clerk, a wife came his way. He was very pleased. But as was his way, he took her as God's gift, looked after her and made her happy. He forgot all about his story. It was she who exercised authority over him, and he was glad that it should be so.

As a solicitor, he was precise, thorough, slow, serviceable, and obliging. Once a client came to him, he never left him. He bought a house at Malad, and made himself a nice garden around it.

VII

He lived a contented life until age and disease came upon him.

When I met him on this occasion, the old affectionate glint was in his eyes. He was to me the one and indispensable. I was to him a proud possession; someone glaringly different from himself; something which supplemented his existence and made it full.

We talked about his health, though he could only mumble and as we did so, our first meeting came to my mind: the meeting between the smiling, humble, oversized boy and the shy, nervous, under-sized, impetuous

boy. I thought of the journey of our lives, year by year, hand-in-hand; one giving all he could; the other taking what was given. This wonderful journey of fifty-eight years, unbroken by a single jolt, unmarred by any kind of misunderstanding, was coming to an end.

As we parted, D.S. said with a smile: "I have always been slow at things, Kanubhai: slow to pass my examinations; slow in getting a wife, I am now slow even in bringing my life to an end."

It was with difficulty that I could restrain my tears. Thus we parted.

LXXIV

LORD JAGANNATH—SISTER WORSHIP —CHAITANYA'S SANDALS

RAJ BHAVAN, LUCKNOW.
May 8, 1955

ON the morning of February 16, we went through the crowded streets of Puri to the Raghunandan Library. Addresses of welcome were read by the Jagannath Dharma Samiti and the All-Orissa Pandits Sammelan, in both of which mention was made of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and the Sanskrit Vishva Parishad. After I had replied, a Pandit thanked me in Sanskrit and in terms which made me blush.

Then to the great temple, rebuilt by Ganga Deva Chola in the eleventh century. Up the steps we went; then through a dark stone alley to the inner sanctum to offer flowers to the three deities—Balarama, Sri Krishna (Jagannath), and their sister Subhadra, who stands between them. This is perhaps the only temple in the world where a sister shares the honours with her brothers though she

was wicked enough to run away with her lover, thereby making the elder brother angry and the younger one happy. And Lakshmi has a seperate temple of her own! A sister after all is a sister.

A dark, mysterious sanctum this, with flickering little oil lamps which serve but to throw the darkness into greater relief. The huge images look down from enormous painted eyes with an unwinking stare. The Brahmans chanted the familiar *mantras*. Then we went round the shrine hand-in-hand, for the passage was pitch dark and the occasional steps were dangerously uneven and invited frantic struggles against the laws of gravity.

At last we came out into the light again. We then went and offered flowers to Lakshmiji who in this temple has at least four hands—a very sensible idea; for if she had only two, as is the case with most of our images of Lakshmi, it would be very inconvenient, with Sri Krishna always having four!

When we came out of the sanctum of Her temple, they told us that we should sit down there for a while and indeed we had to, for the goddess had ordained it that way.

In the compound surrounding the great temple there are many shrines to which the *pujaris* were inviting us. Mentally, therefore, I modified the old phrase: *sarvadeva namaskaram Keshavam pratigachhati*, and said to myself: "In bowing to Sri Krishna Himself I have bowed to all the gods."

But I went into one little shrine where, behind the worshipped image was concealed the seated image of Surya, the Sun God. As I have told you before, tradition has it that this was once the central image in the Konarak Sun Temple which was concealed in this way, so that it should not be destroyed.

II

The shrine of Jagannath is unique in that it is pre-historic and that the images are of wood. An aboriginal tribe,

the Shabars, have the prior right to worship them. An old tradition has it that King Indradyumna installed them in the shrine after recovering them from a Shabar. Later on the temple became a Buddhistic shrine; then a centre of Tantric worship; later still, it was dedicated to Sri Krishna.

I doubt whether wooden statues of Buddha were ever worshipped, though this is a point on which I admit ignorance. Ferguson attributed a Buddhistic origin to the temple on the ground that it contains a *rathayatra;* the chariot of Jagannath, which is paraded once a year with much pomp and ceremony. I am again not sure whether such *rathayatras* were invented by the Buddhists or whether they were known in many parts of India long before Buddhism came into being.

There is a mystery surrounding the images in the Jagannath shrine. Every twelve years, when there are two *Vaisakhas* (one extra month), the wooden images are taken down from their pedestals and carried to the sea for immersion. Some object in the hollow of the Jagnnath image is taken out in darkness by a blindfolded *pujari* and transplanted into a new one; for after the immersion of the old images, new ones are installed.

What this secret object is, nobody knows. If it is a bone, it may be one of Buddha's. A scholar once claimed that it was a bone of Krishna; but I have yet to come across a Hindu custom by which bones are worshipped, however divine their departed possessors might have been. It has been the custom from the earliest times to consign the bones of men to sacred rivers.

Another tradition has it that this secret something is a *Nilamahadeva*–a blue-stone *linga* of Shiva. One thing, however, is indisputable, the temple was a great centre of Tantrism. Bhairavi Chakra prevailed here as *pravrtte bhairavi chakre sarva Varnah Dvijatayah:* where Bhairavi Chakra prevails, all men are Brahmans. That is why here, under the shadow of the shrine, all men are equal. There

are no high-born nor lowborn. The offerings to Jagannath have to be distributed to everyone without distinction of caste or religion. This is the one spot in India where a man is a man.

In course of time the shrine became the centre of Vaishnavism, which worshipped Balarama, Krishna and Subhadra. But this is uncertain religious history—speculation if you like.

The fact is that Jagannath is one of the most ancient, the most venerated and the most catholic shrines, not only in India but in any part of the world. Everyone can worship Jagannath. The Muslims have been known to be its worshippers, and the aboriginal tribes worship it still. Here, under the shadow of the temple, every school of Hindu thought and philosophy has flourished. Every saint and reformer including Shankara, Ramanuja, Nanak, Chaitanya and Vallabha have offered their prayers to Jagannath.

III

I insisted on visiting one spot, the house in which Chaitanya, the architect of India's Bhakti Renaissance in the 16th century, lived for sixteen years and in which he died.

As we went to the house, the part which *bhakti,* the devotional movement has played in India's life rose before me.

In about the 8th century, somewhere in Tamilnad, a poetic genius of the highest order beautifully expressed the *bhakti* which later blossomed into the *Bhakti* Renaissance. Says the *Bhagavat:*

> "As the wingless nestlings wait for the mother, as the hungry calves long to be suckled, as the love-lorn damsel waits for her lover, so, lotus-eyed, does my mind yearn for Thee . . . To hear about Vishnu, to sing of Him, to fall at His feet, to worship Him, to be His friend, to dedicate oneself to Him, is the ninefold *bhakti.*"

> "To the *gopis* (says Krishna), the nights when I, their lover, went about with them in Vrindavana, were like

flitting moments, but when I left them, their nights were endless as cycles....In this way, hundreds who knew not My real Self loved Me only as their Lover, and attained through Me, the *Parabrahman*."

In the first instance, this great work took hold of the South. For the twelve Vaishnava Alwars, the wandering singers who were mad after God, had taught that He could only be realized by intense love and complete surrender, irrespective of rank or caste or culture. Then came the Acharyas with the doctrine of *Prapatti*—surrender unto God. Different schools of *bhakti* were founded by different philosophers and saints, leaving the religious and moral life of India. The Krishna-consciousness became universal.

Then followed the pure *bhakti* of Krishna and Radha. Nimbarka said: "We worship Radha, the daughter of Vrishabha, the goddess who joyfully adorns the left lap of the great deity Sri Krishna, as beautiful as Sri Krishna Himself, surrounded by thousands of damsels. She it is who fulfils all desires."

IV

In the 15th century, the Sultanate of Delhi was spreading destruction in the holy places in the North. Still, in Vrindavana, where Sri Krishna spent His childhood with the *gopis*, the heart of India was throbbing. Wherever the songs of Radha-Krishna were sung—and they were sung in all parts of India—or, wherever Vishnu was worshipped and the *Bhagavadgita* or the *Bhagavat* recited, Vrindavana was the living symbol of joy in this life and of salvation in the next.

Pilgrims were drawn to it from all parts of the country from generation to generation, particularly in the holy month of *Bhadrapada*, in north India (*Sravan* in Western India), in which Sri Krishna was born.

In the fourteenth century at Navadwipa (Nadia), an ancient centre of learning in Bengal, some schools of the later Buddhism preached love as the one avenue leading

to Final emancipation. That part of the country also rang with the passionate love-songs of one of the greatest of Indian poets, Chandidas.

During the reign of Sikander Lodi, Madhavendrapuri, a *dashnami sannyasi* and a disciple of Madhva, came with the lyrics of Chandidas ringing in his ears to Vrindavana. On the banks of the Yamuna, in the sacred groves, hallowed by the divine romance of Radha and Sri Krishna, the learned sadhu wandered like a maiden in love, singing songs and seeking His love.

Madhavendra's ardent love fused his learning and devotion into a flame and gave new vitality to the devotional schools of Bengal. He built a temple in Vrindavana which attracted *bhaktas* from Bengal.

V

Vishvambhara or Nimmai, as he was affectionately called, was born in February 1486 to a pious and learned Brahman of Nadia. As he grew up into a handsome, impetuous and brilliant youth, he evoked universal admiration. He married and settled down, running a *tol*.

A few years later, when Nimmai went to Gaya to perform his father's obsequial ceremonies, Ishwara Puri, a disciple of Madhavendra, initiated him into the mysteries of *bhakti*. Nimmai was stirred to his depths; mystic visions awoke in him the love Sri Krishna. Pride fell from him and so did the lure of the world. "Leave me" he said, "I am not of the world. I will go to Vrindavana and meet my Lord."

Like a love-lorn, heart-broken maid, pining for Sri Krishna, he sang of the Lord, danced for Him, fainted overborne by the pangs of separation, often went into an ecstatic trance. His mother thought he was mad. But the devotees knew better. "He was a god", they said.

A band of devotees soon gathered round this young, godlike saint and went with him from place to place. He led the devotional *kirtans* in the course of which he and his

followers sang and danced ceaselessly to the accompaniment of music. Nimmai became intoxicated with God and his followers saw in him Sri Krishna Himself.

Nimmai took *Sanyas* in 1510 under the name of Krishna Chaitanya and sent his follower, Loknath, to make Vrindavana the centre of *bhakti*. After a short stay at Puri, he went on an all-India tour, visiting the shrines and holy places dedicated to Sri Krishna. Wherever he went, his inspiring presence and flaming love for Sri Krishna set fire to the hearts of those who came to him.

Wherever he went men followed him. Scholars wedded to *Vedant* became his devotees; rich men provided him and his party with every facility and kings built temples wherever he halted.

Ultimately, in obedience to the wishes of his mother, he went to live at Jagannath Puri. From time to time, congregations of his followers gathered there from all parts of India. Chaitanya's *kirtan* parties led through the streets of the town became the great attraction.

VI

Two eminent Muslim officers of the Nawab of Gond—Sakar Malik and Dabir Khan—met Chaitanya on one of his tours and were so much impressed by the saint that they left their position, their wealth and their faith, and, by the orders of the Master came to live in Vrindavana under the names of Sanatana and Rupa.

In about 1506 Vallabhacharya Goswami, who was more of a scholar than a *bhakta*, founded a shrine of Srinathji in Vrindavana. He established the cult of *Pushtimarg* which was later to inspire the poetry of the great eight poets, headed by the immortal Surdas.

On April 27, 1526 Babar made Delhi the seat of his newly conquered kingdom and the holy places of India saw comparative peace.

In 1556 the Great Akbar became the Mughal Emperor and a new age dawned on India. The foreigner became

a national monarch, establishing those catholic traditions which brought the Bhakti Renaissance into spring-time bloom.

With unparalleled statesmanship Akbar removed the disabilities under which the Hindus had been suffering. He visited Vrindavana, and Man Singh, his favourite general, became the disciple of Jiva Goswami, the nephew of the Goswamis, Rupa and Sanatana. It was under his inspiration that the temple of Govindji was built—a temple which still stands intact as a symbol of the power which was Chaitanya and a living testimony to Akbar's greatness.

VII

Mankind has never seen such love as was Chaitanya's. The individual love of Sappho, Mira, Helois and Laila, are but faint echoes of his. None of them had such a love-lorn heart. To none was the lover—in his case Sri Krishna—so ever-present. His emotion had the quality of giving power, light and feeling to whatever it touched. Dances and songs, prayers and *kirtan* dedicated to Sri Krishna, swept the country with an emotional flood which was as lyrical as it was ennobling.

Chaitanya never taught and rarely entered into philosophic discussion; nor did he make efforts to gain disciples. When he died in 1533, it was his personality and experiences rather than his teachings which became the inspiration of the *bhakti* movements. They released new creative forces in Vrindavana; in the rest of India their influence opened the floodgates of a sweeping religious urge, by direct influence, or indirect impact.

Like a mighty flood, *bhakti*, as reintegrated by Chaitanya, surged round the love of Radha and Krishna. It entered deep into the popular consciousness, intensifying the emotional awareness of fresh joys. It won liberalising triumphs of the heart over the bondage and suffering which political slavery and social rigidity had imposed upon the country. It imparted freshness to life, creative power to literature

and richness to human relations till poets in many parts of India echoed to the sentiment:

"To Vraja alone shall I hie;
But never to Heaven:
For there I cannot meet
Nanda's son, my Darling."

Even now, as we know, in many parts of the country men and women congregate, join with song, music and dance, in the *kirtans* to experience the ecstatic glow of a joy which knows neither sin nor suffering.

VIII

All these thoughts came to me when I visited the Radhakant Temple, where Chaitanya had lived and died. I looked at the beautiful image of Sri Krishna which he had worshipped. I saw his copper water-pot, covered with *chandan*, which hundreds of years of adoration had applied and the blanket that he used.

Here was something sacred, something that this wonderful man had used. And in some way that set my heart glowing.

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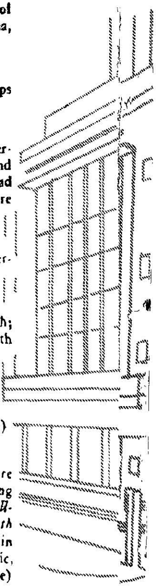

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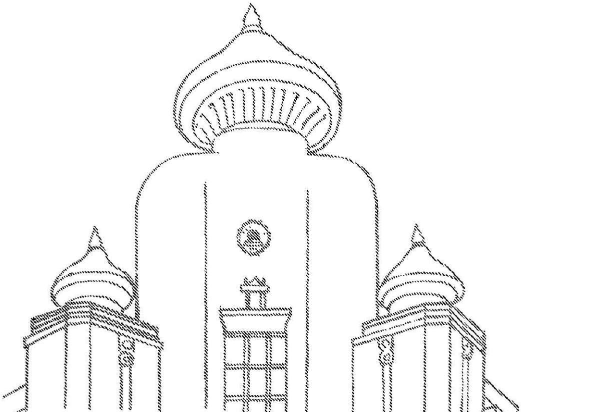

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THE AUTHOR

KANAIYALAL MANEKLAL MUNSHI'S versatility and achievements are in a way unique. He is an eminent lawyer, one of the framers of India's Constitution and a seasoned statesman. Coming under the inspiring influence of Sri Aurobindo during his student days, Munshi has been an ardent fighter for India's freedom working at different stages in close association with Jinnah, Tilak, Besant, Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru. His achieveme[illegible] Home Minister of Bombay in 1937, as India's A[illegible] General, in Hyderabad before the Police Acti[illegible] India's Food Minister and at present as Gover[illegible] Uttar Pradesh have been characterised by rare c[illegible] and decisive energy.

Acknowledged as the foremost writer in [illegible] Gujarati literature, he has to his credit a va[illegible] varied literature including novels, dramas, m[illegible] and history in Gujarati, as also several histori[illegible] other works in English, notably, "Gujarat [illegible] Literature", "Imperial Gurjaras", "Creative [illegible] Life", "To Badrinath", "Bhagavad Gita and [illegible] Life", and 'Glory That was Gurjara Desa", etc.